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MARK TILLOTSON.

A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY

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"John Westacott," "By the Western Sea," "Days Afoot," "Quiet War Scenes," "Our Foreign Competitors," etc.

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MARK TILLOTSON.

CHAPTER I.

THE RIPPLE OF VILLAGE LIFE.

LIFE went on very evenly and calmly to the group of people whose aims and successes or failures go to make up this history during the next month.

Summer was dulling the vivid hues of spring, and changing the tones of the foliage, that Edith Treverton passed amidst in her walks from Barton Mills to Greyborough. Luke was full of schemes for creating a great business, and friends who noted his energy and shrewdness were gathering around him and supporting him; and his mother was triumphal in her speech when her Luke became, as he so frequently did, the topic of talk in the mill parlour. His father plodded on as he had done in bygone years, passing his days amidst the sack piles, and dust, and fringing cobwebs of the mill; sometimes coming out

to have a chat with Shedden, who, after painting the cottage and its trailing vines, had commenced a sketch of the little bridge, with a girl's figure leaning in thought over the parapet. When Mark Tillotson saw this sketch, he said to him jokingly,—

“That's another man's property, David.”

To which Shedden had replied,—

“It's only just a figure to give life interest to the scene.”

“Fudge !” replied Mark ; “ Edith Treverton may not have been present on that bridge in the flesh, but you have outlined her figure. You will have a chance of studying her in all her beauty at the theatre. Our box is in full view of her seat.”

“And the Signorina's,” had replied his friend musingly.

Mark had not yet taken his sister to see the Bohemian views at the Professor's ; he intended doing so before the theatrical night, and he had told his sister about them, and a prose story of the author of her pet little book had given her additional interest in old mediæval castles on rocky lonely heights. This book, called “ The Last of the Falkenbergers,” had brought the life in these castles down to modern

times, at least within her own century, and its teaching had awakened in her fresh yearnings to speak to the world her thoughts, and had ennerved her to work onward in translating the little book that had so enthralled her with its poesy and philosophy.

One thought in this castle height romance—that was of the time of the first Napoleon—often clung to her in her moments of weak depression: the thought that this world, glorious and beautiful as it is, is but the preparatory school for yet more glorious worlds where the true life begins. “Abnegation and self-sacrifice show the true worth of men,” iterated one of the characters, and “that is why I can never accept Napoleon as a great man. He did not sacrifice himself for mankind, but sacrificed mankind for himself.” And the train of thought aroused by this passage set mind and brain dreaming upon the possibilities of the future life, and the beauties and joys of this world; and as was now her custom, she wrote in a note-book words afterwards read by one very dear to her, though now he knew it not.

“We talk about the glories of heaven. How shall we be able to see these glories when we cannot see

all the beauties of this earth? The very beauty of tree, and sky, and sea, are hidden to most of us; neither eye, nor ear, nor even nose, can seize upon the subtle beauty and glory of this world. How then will our cramped, warped souls grasp all future glories?"

And she rose from her seat as she had written, and stepped out upon the lawn, and seemed to see sky, and distant tawny sea, and cloud, and wood, and parkland, and winding river, with more holy joy and thankfulness, and with a longing to help others to that peaceful joy.

Her brother had seen how in other countries other people, even the poor, enjoyed the hours of leisure, and he was organizing amongst his own workpeople musical, theatrical, and dancing evenings; and Madge longed to help him in this work, but though gaining strength at present, her help was but confined to playing, or teaching some of the girls knitting, or draughts or some such games.

The work was only in its first stage; but, being summer time, Mark had adopted the plan of taking about a dozen lads on country walks with him to surrounding villages, telling them all the bits of

interest or of history connected with the district, inviting each lad to tell stories, allowing no filth to come uppermost, and by dint of sometimes having a lad or two that belonged to a church choir, getting some fair singing out of them. A bread-and-cheese and beer repast, with perchance some salad, at a village inn, was the only sensual part of these walks ; but Mark threw his life into them, and after the first two Saturdays he found he had to select from the applicants to accompany him.

The current of daily life had hardly been so smooth at Langley Abbas of late, and Mr. Treverton had been promised a visit from the Rev. Mr. Gridthorp, the vicar of the parish where his daughter was staying,—at least so said certain little handbills which were posted up on barn-doors and gate-posts in the village. An agitation was proceeding to lift the agricultural labourers from “the deplorable condition of serfdom to a position of manly independence,” and a meeting was to be held upon the great hill, and one of the speakers announced was the Rev. A. G. Gridthorp, “who had devoted his life to the cause of the poor and oppressed”: so ran the bill. Other speakers were to be present: one noted

London agitator, who, without visible means of subsistence, always travelled well, and lived at good hotels ; and one ex-M.P., whose name was connected with some companies that had come to grief, ruining hundreds of middle-class workers in their fall. An ex-Cabinet Minister had lately been down to Langley to examine the labourers' cottages, intending to exploit the misery of them ; but no word had dropped from his lips since his visit.

Early one morning, ere the sun was high in the heavens, Mr. Treverton was going his usual rounds to see his men were doing well their work, when in nearing the barn at the top of the hill, he halted to read one of these handbills.

"Ugh !" he said, as he passed on, "the agricultural labourer the most pitiable object on God's earth, is he? Give me the life of one of my carters on twelve shillings a week, so called, to any miner or Sheffield factory hand at three times the money. So Mr. Gridthorp's coming down, is he? Well, my men will go and cheer him, and then laugh over him when he is gone. What is that man after? As mean as the devil at home ; can't deal with his own neighbours, so Waddington says, for fear the poor little

shopkeepers get a penny extra profit, and I'll wager he gives fifty pounds to this Tenter. Well, well, he knows his own life best, but it's enough to make a young fellow like Luke laugh at a man that looks no further than keeping kindly and honest to his neighbours.

"Mornin', Thatcher," he said, as he turned the corner of the barn, and saw a man working upon some bonds that he was preparing for binding down the thatch upon the ricks.

In this village most of the men and lads went by nicknames, from their work, or their qualities, or habits ; and even their children were called after these nicknames, that thus became a second surname, or usurped entirely the family name ; so this man was called Thatcher from his usual work.

"Mornin'," was the answer, in a free style.

"So you're going to have Tenter down here again, and a meetin', eh?" said Mr. Treverton, adopting, as he always did, the style of the village talk.

"Sim so, 'twill be a bit of a spree, but don't 'spect many o' our chaps 'ull go."

"No?" quietly asked Mr. Treverton.

“Why, Cuddy Tenter don’t do nothing but uphold rogues and drunkards.”

“Don’t ’ee think so?” said Mr. Treverton.

“Think! I be sure on it. Cuddy Tenter’s lot be glad enough to say to we, ‘Have ’ee got ’er a sixpence to lend I?’ in winter; and in summer, when there’s plenty o’ work, and the drunkest on ’em gets a job, then they do turn up biggoty.”

“But I thought they were giving away money a bit back.”

“Es, to them as never earned none. Why, there’s Snail’s wife,—he as ev been bad so long, as missus sent the dinners to,—they went to she, and ’cos she’s a tidy woman, they looked at her bedding, and ’twas all clean and nice-like; and oh, they says, you don’t want nothin’, and off they goes; ’cos why? ’cos Snail never went wi’ ’em.”

“Well, Snail’s all right now; he’s slow, but he’s safe anyway.”

“Slow!” said the thatcher; “’e’s fast to any o’ Cuddy’s lot. They don’t never put their shoulders out, ’cept it’s tellin’ lies. They do laugh at we, but we don’t never say nothin’ to they.”

“If they have to come to you for sixpence in the winter, it’s you can laugh at them, I think.”

"Maybe, but I should like to punch their heads when they'm so biggoty like."

"Never hit out at a fool's head, man ; your fist is worth more than his head."

"Like enough," laughed the man, as he turned away from his master, to whom he had given no "sir" or symptom of deference.

The meeting came off in due course, the ex-M.P. and the Rev. Mr. Gridthorp sending letters of excuse, that were read, at the last moment ; the latter enclosing a subscription for the funds.

"It's all very well, wife," said Mr. Treverton, as he read the account of the meeting in a London paper the next morning. "Our people may be better off than factory hands, but they want more decent pleasures, and they want provision for old age. They've plenty o' time the long winter evenings, and we have the reading-rooms now, and why they can't let them have music in the public-house I can't see, and games too. I met young Mr. Tillotson at Minster the other day, and he was telling me how the poor people amused themselves abroad, and hadn't half the time our folks have, and half a crown a week wages in the fields. Our poor folk want

amusement as much or more than rich folk. By the way, when's Edith coming back?" he suddenly said, as he laid down his paper and rose to once more go forth to superintend the farm work.

"Two days after the theatre night. Mrs. Waddington asked to let her stay up to then."

"Young Luke seems to be doing well, according to Mr. Tillotson's account," her husband added as he left the room, which showed that "young Luke" was being watched by Edith's father as to his success in his new departure in life.

CHAPTER II.

MADGE AND LOLA.

ALTHOUGH the date for the theatrical performance was fast approaching, Mark Tillotson had not yet taken his sister to look over the photographs of Bohemian castles and mountain heights, and he intended introducing her to Lola before that evening, for then the meeting would be inevitable, as Miss Treverton, for whom Madge had a growing respect since their walk together to Barton Mills, would be with her.

Mark himself had twice been at the Signor's, and had enjoyed an argument with him upon Austrian politics, interspersed with a little excellent music; and he felt such an evening a relief from the ordinary routine of Greyborough life, where the men talked of dinners or local matters, or mild local scandal if a *souffçon* of scandal was in the air upon which to talk. But if Mark ventured to broach broader subjects, of fuller, richer interest, a silence generally

succeeded his words, leaving him compelled to await the rebroaching of the ordinary topics.

The Signor had very strong views upon crowned heads, and upon the rights of man ; and to Mark's discomfiture he emphasized his views by references to the monied boors, and illiterate sensualists, who grasped and held most of the local positions of influence or power. Men who by what was termed business qualities, had risen by dint of their wealth ; acquired by a steady observance of an utter absence of charity, intermixed with a judicial display of public philanthropy. Men who were flint-like in business, exacting every penny due, and paying the lowest wage compatible with quietude ; heeding no tale of sorrow or struggle from their own customers, but enforcing their due, but earning the name of "charitable" by public donations.

Mark could not but agree with the Signor when he inveighed against such rulers, but he heartily opposed his theories of the glories of a republic.

"When man has attained to comprehend and bow to the reign of character," he said, "then I agree with you a republic will be the highest form of government. Then the noble and the able combined

with the good, will hold highest sway, and injustice will be almost exterminated ; but until that reign of character commences, I prefer a monarchy that at least prevents the powerfully unprincipled, seizing upon the supreme power."

"The people should rule, and the reign of character would begin."

"Yes, bad character," answered Mark shortly. "Look at the private lives of some of our so-called popular leaders ; fierceness and bitterness is their hold upon the mob. 'No mercy' is mobility's true badge still, as in 1789. Only one thing, the mob is not so numerous as it was ; the self-reliant ones are increasing. I must bring my friend Graves to talk to you," he added.

"I wish you would," had interrupted Lola, "for then perhaps I should not be compelled to listen to such dry politics."

And so on another evening the travelling quartette were met in the Signor's room, and he and Graves held a lengthy argument upon European politics, and Lola was not compelled to listen, for Mark sat near her, and she ran over snatches of songs, and delicate *morceaux* of tender music, and then passing into the

other room they chatted over beauty spots of Europe and of travel pleasures; and ere he had left that evening Mark had promised he would call with his sister on the following day.

Madge was not sorry when in the morning Mark came into her room, as was frequently his wont, and asked her to meet him in the afternoon to call on Lola. He had told her of the interesting evenings he had had at the Professor's house—the polyglottic debates on the politics of many nations, and of the aptitude of Lola to interpret thought and mood by snatches of harmony; and she was curious to know closer these people who so interested her brother. At first she hardly cared for the introduction; she had heard rumours that Lola was somewhat free with her male friends, of whom she had many, and Greyborough propriety did not like its daughters being friendly with her, though as she was clever they were glad to say those same daughters were being taught by her; but the morning Mark asked Madge to meet him she had been reading her favourite master, and had marked a morsel in a prose epilogue to one of his works that said, “Man is not born to flee from his fellow-men, but to live with them, and

after his strength to do good to them"; and she thought it would be better for her to know one of whom her brother had at least made a friend. She felt it would be better also for herself to know more of the world and of human nature, so that she might take a broader, fuller view of life, in all its depths, and shadows, and joys.

She was ever full of longing to do good, and be a teacher, and she had lost some friends by outspoken words upon their secret peccadilloes and outward pretences. At school they had retaliated by reminding her of her hatred of discipline; and now, in her quieter judgment, her only excuse for her hatred of that discipline was that she now felt sure it was a wrong discipline, one leading up to a pretence of knowledge and shallow veneer of obedience, for the sake of what was to be gained by it, and not purely for the good, as goodness. And she almost felt glad she had rebelled against this sham, as she longed to rebel, and incite others to rebellion, against all the shams, and pretences, and deceptions, and follies of grown-up society. But sometimes, when she had broken bounds, and spoken sharply against some miserable "sale," as she called it, of one of her young

school-girl friends, to some old decayed *roué* for "so much money down and a yearly sum to follow," her friends had quietly told her they were friends, and she ought not to speak so. "If we were 'friends,' we ought to have stopped such misery," she exclaimed.

She rarely broke forth against such sins or deceptions, but she found some verse in her little book that seemed thoroughly to fit and emphasize the teaching she had failed to impart. Shams were all there laid bare, and true worth and true speech only held up to reverence.

As she sat in her room this morning after Mark had left, she withdrew from her desk some papers, upon which she had essayed to give forcible English to some thoughts of Mirza Schaffy. One piece of paper she read over, and then said, "Yes, people will ever resent plain words spoken directly to them."

"Oft, oft, men say, Friend, thou art rash and thoughtless ;
Speak as you think : your words may well be true sense ;
Yet men are hurt, and by your words are taught less.
Think what you will, but speak with greater prudence.

To good advice I lend attentive ear,
Yet still I speak as thoughts come surging forth.
A knave may think, what he to speak would fear ;
Truth, truth of speech, is the true poet's worth.

I sing not, if no power within my soul
With urging force compelleth me to sing :
Like to the unseen force that, as the seasons roll,
Brings fruit and blossom to the buds of spring."

"How many are there," thought Madge, as she read over the words she had written, "who feel this impelling force, and truly respond to it without fear, or thought even, of man's opinion : and yet there is the true poet ;" and Madge left her desk, bearing the piece of paper in her hand, and went to the window to look out on to the soft, undulating landscape, now calm and rich in midsummer tones. There she fell a-pondering over her brother, and his life and friends. To what did this intimacy with the Raphaellis tend? Mark seemed ever unmoved in the presence of her girl friends, and by them and his own intimates had become dubbed cold-blooded, if not a woman-hater ; but what might not be the effect of frequent association with a clever woman, with more than ordinary powers to attract and amuse? And Madge thought of two mottos Mark had once brought her home—mottos he had seen painted up in the porch of an old Elizabethan manor house, above the seats where for many a generation many a couple had sat

and dreamed of love, unheeding the sententious words that spoke out from the white wall above them : "Take care of whom you speak, to whom you speak, and how, and when, and where." So ran the one motto, but the other was the thought that ran now in Madge's mind : "A strong attachment to a fine woman is hardly to be reduced within the bounds of reason." Would she ever have to remind Mark of those words, for surely the Signorina was hardly the woman that cynical, calm, sarcastic Mark should mate with. "Better, perhaps, that I should know her," thought Madge ; "at least I can then judge what effect her beauty has upon him ; and he asserts that she is beautiful—at least, pretty."

At the appointed time brother and sister met at the Signor's, and found Lola alone ; receiving them graciously, and Madge with *impressement*. She fell talking of the run with Mark and his friend from Bohemia, and led up easily to the object of the visit—the views of that unknown land ; and Madge was soon deeply interested with scenes of mountain heights and fantastic rocky peaks, amid which lay, just peeping forth, grim bits of grey fortresses and robber strongholds.

Lola gave hints of the weird legends that clustered around these heights, and told of the Hunger towers, and rock dungeons down in the slimy, oozing rock, shut off from ear of the outer world by triple iron doors, clamped, and bolted, and barred, defying hope to those who were dragged within their black, narrow limits.

The colour mounted to Madge's cheeks as she listened to these faint snatches of memory of this rich, unworked field of romance. What poems, what idylls, what ballads could there be weaved and spun!

"Oh, Mark!" she exclaimed, "you must take me with you some day to see this wonderful Bohemia; what poems there are in it!"

"Ay, Madge, 'Ballads of Bohemia'; good name for a book, eh?"

Lola was surprised at the enthusiasm she had aroused; she had shown these pictures to many a pupil, and to her pupils' friends, without moving them to a remark beyond, "It seems a pretty place"; but when she turned to a picture of some spot on the Rhine, then grew interest, and exclamations of, "Oh, that's where the Harrises were last year; isn't it charming?" The known, was of interest, the unknown

incited no wish for knowledge. But with her present visitor there was positive excitement, and a yearning to dive into this unknown ; and Lola looked at the head bent down over the views, and noted the broad, pale forehead and dreamy eyes, now full of light ; and then she turned to Mark, saying, "You should take Miss Tillotson with you some spring ; our Austrian legends and scenery would not be lost upon her, I am sure."

"We had better all go together," answered Mark jokingly.

"Just as we came from there this year," replied Lola.

"And David shall do the sketching, and you the writing, Madge."

Lola's quick eye noted that a deeper flush tinged the cheeks of Madge as she leant over the book and gave no reply. Probably, she thought, Miss Tillotson has no wish to travel with the Professor's daughter, a music mistress ; and she turned to Mark, saying somewhat sarcastically, "Can you imagine us all being in Prague together?"

"Why not?" answered Mark ; "I'm sure the Professor would help us wonderfully : but my sister is

hardly strong enough to travel, her doctors say ; but we may meet some day in Bohemia."

As he spoke, a low tap at the door was followed by a servant entering and announcing, "Miss Treverton." An angry flash went forth from Lola's eyes as she hastened across the room and said quickly, "You knew I was engaged "; but it was too late, Edith was at the door, and Lola was compelled, with a smile, to receive her, as Mark stepped forward, saying, "Ah, Miss Treverton, this is an agreeable *rencontre*, and you meet my sister again, you see. Strange we should call on your day!"

"And it is my last lesson," said Edith, as she took the hand of Madge, who had also left the views to greet her.

"Are you going to leave us, then ?" asked Madge.

"I am going home. I have stayed longer than I expected," said Edith.

"But not before the dramatic night, surely ? You will be at the theatre ?" exclaimed Mark.

"Yes, I return the next evening," quietly replied Edith.

"Then we shall see you there ; my sister is going. You must come round to us. You can let her come

round to our box, Signorina," he added, turning to Lola.

"You must come and fetch her," quickly came the answer. "Miss Treverton will be *égarée* in a crowded theatre."

"Oh, we shall be all friends on that night," responded Mark, and then turning to the views they had been looking at, said to Edith, "I brought my sister to see these curious views ; probably you have seen them ;" and he commenced turning over the leaves, forgetful that a few moments before he was leaving.

Seeing him point out different views to Edith, Lola drew his sister to a couch, asking her if she often visited the theatre, adding, "We so rarely get good opera here," and thus leading Madge into a conversation, whilst she watched Mark, who chatted on with Edith, pointing out the castles, and the mountain peaks, and telling her of all the beauties of pine forest and woodland scenery, until she said with a half-suppressed sigh, "Our English scenery must satisfy me. It is hardly likely I shall ever visit such scenes."

"So said Madge there not long since, but she is

making up her mind now at least to look up my Bohemia as she calls it."

"And he almost refuses to take me," interjected Madge.

"Not when you are stronger, and can have a suitable friend to travel with you. I won't take the responsibility alone. My sister is not strong," he added, turning to Edith, "and I fear the excitement of living in such history might be too much for her. She felt that scene in the quarry the other day, and dwelt on it for days afterwards. She would hardly be so self-reliant in difficulties as you were then, Miss Treverton."

There was in Mark's voice a tone of reverential respect, that made Lola rise to her feet and walk across to the table where he was standing—an action that reminded Mark they were probably delaying Edith's lesson, and he turned to his sister, saying, "We are interrupting work, I fear," and stretching out his hand to Edith, he said, "My sister shall remind me that you are to come round to her;" and accompanied by Lola they left the room, after Madge had added, as she shook hands, "My brother does not often forget."

As brother and sister walked homewards together, Madge was excessively quiet. She had called on the Raphaellis to see this Signorina, of whom her brother had spoken so much, and instead of the lively, vivacious Italian, she had met a quiet, almost silent English girl; for whilst Mark was chatting with Edith, she had scarcely spoken beyond detached remarks made to save apparent rudeness. Madge's mind was more at ease, but it was divided between thoughts of the glimpses into a fresh life that the views had brought before her, and the friendship of her brother with this music teacher.

Had she seen Lola an hour later, she would hardly have deemed her a silent, calm English girl. Edith was gone, and Lola was alone in the room, where an hour before had stood Mark and his sister. She had been watching at the window until Edith had passed out of the gate and had bowed to her with a bright smile; but as her pupil disappeared her face changed, and her hands were clenched as she turned from the window. "Waddington's a fool not to see it," she exclaimed; "I suppose I must open his eyes, and perhaps then he would say nothing,—to keep the Tillotsons friendly. Oh, I hate these rich people!

that pale-faced sister with her enthusiasm about mediævalism and his care of her. How he seemed to bow to that stupid country girl! He thinks her good, I suppose. Ugh! because she has never had the opportunity to be bad;" and Lola laughed a harsh, acrid laugh, as she walked across to the table. "All women are the same, and the men——" and her shoulders raised themselves to her ears in expression of the men.

"How I hate these rich people!" she burst forth again, as she moved from the table, where for a moment she nervously turned over the leaves of the album they had been looking over. "Why cannot I be rich?" she exclaimed, as she neared a mirrored bracket that hung against the wall, and looked at her face reflected in it. "His sister! The quiet, condescending, patronising air with which she thanked me. If I had not been a music teacher, she would have asked me to call; but her brother will call again;" and she laughed again as she looked at her heightened colour and flashing eyes. "I can make them all bend and stoop as I will, and that girl will be gone. I've heard too much of her from him, and she thinks her friend Waddington so glorious a man. Poor

little one, and yet it is I, am to inspire him to act, he avows. They say he will be rich some day, but will he? Tillotson is, and so is his friend, that quiet dreamer Shedden. There is no waking him, but once arouse Tillotson and he would be *insouciant* of what all the world said. He is a man worth conquering, and then there would be an end of these weary, weary lessons, and these wretched debts. It can't last much longer, says *le padre*; we must go into a smaller house, and then adieu all chance. This night at the theatre. I must have that dress. He can take the blue-eyed girl round to his pale-faced sister, and take her place by me. He shall do it, and perhaps tell me of that quarry exploit again. I hate that girl. Would he come back with us? No, because of his sister. He must after one of our concerts, but what may happen before then? Anything out of this tame English mill round, without life or love. Break down his respect for that girl, faugh, how I hate to see it! and I could do anything with him." Lola stopped her thoughts, and her mutterings, and looked into the glass as though searching for something in her own eyes. "I can do it!" she exclaimed suddenly, "and he will believe no more

in Miss Innocent." And Lola threw herself down upon a couch, and throwing back her arms over her head, let her thoughts run on upon the life she might lead were she but rich; life on the Lido; the queen of all the bathers; or at Arcachon, or Trouville; and bits of novels she had read of all the intrigue and life she might revel in, were she but rich. She imagined herself in some brilliant costume walking down the planks to the sea, watched by all as she rowed out to her morning bath; and Monte Carlo, and all its bathing and gaieties, passed before her mind, where she might be queen of all the women there; and with a stamp of her outstretched foot, she quickly rose, looked again at herself in the mirror, and with a sneer at her own face exclaimed, "And you let him think more of that meek country girl, the only man that can put everything in your power. Ugh! you are the music mistress, and must go to your lesson, and pretend to be very English, and—proper. Better any life than this one," she muttered, as she left the room to walk hastily forth to keep an appointment.

CHAPTER III.

THE DOUBLE DRAMA.

THERE was a crowd outside the doors of the Theatre Royal, Greyborough—a crowd that told the amateurs, as they pushed their way quickly into the stage door at the side, that at least the popular parts of the house would be full.

It was an old society, with some actors in it who silenced even the sneers of the professional journals at the amateurs; but to-night the friends of the society were curious to see how their new member, who had only played hitherto some small parts, would bear himself. And Luke's name was on many a tongue in Greyborough at the moment. A paragraph had just appeared in the local prints, rather vaguely stating that "the prospectus of a new Building Society would be issued in a few days, with a most influential directorate, and with a secretary whose energy had already made its mark in a new business lately established in their midst"; and rumour had as-

signed this secretaryship to Luke, and had named amongst the directors some of the biggest business men in the town. The paragraph went on to say, "that it was believed the new company had already acquired the refusal of certain extensive tracts of land that were being opened up by a new railway that was nearly completed ; and this property alone, from the terms upon which it would be acquired, must place the society upon a firm financial basis." These notes and rumours had caused Luke's name to be used very freely of late in Greyborough, and as a coming successful man he quickly became a popular one ; and he had during the last week found no difficulty in getting all his friends to take tickets in some part of the house, for a performance in which he was to take a prominent part.

Luke, as he played a principal role, had had assigned to him as dressing-room what was known as the star room ; but this honour was somewhat toned down by the low comedy man, who had an arduous and trying part, being also allowed to dress in the same room. The play, as Luke had told Mark, was one of Byron's best, which meant it was a play called " Blow for Blow," written when comedy had become mild in

satire and weak in wit, but before it had descended into nought but elongated farce. In the first act Luke appeared as a navy lieutenant, and his dressing was an easy matter, as but little making up was required. His father and mother were not to be present, but Edith had spent the afternoon with her French mistress, and was coming down with her and the Professor, Luke promising to come round to the front to them after the first piece was over, as he had nothing to do in a farce which succeeded the comedy.

Just before the curtain went up, Luke went down to the small hole in the centre of it, his heart beating quickly with excitement; and he looked round the house from this hidden point of advantage. Straight in front of him he saw Lola and Edith, but no Professor. How handsome they looked!—Lola's well-modelled neck and shoulders bearing her handsome face, her flashing eyes sparkling out beneath her black undulous hair. As her eyes swept the theatre, they seemed to rest for a moment with piercing effect, as though looking into Luke's, and he forgot that no glimpse of him could be seen. He had told them he should find time to have a look at them from this little peephole before the curtain rose, and

did Lola know he was there now? Edith looked up as he seemed transfixed by Lola's gaze, her full, deep blue eyes, for a moment unveiled by their long dark lashes, looked out towards him, it almost seemed warningly; and then they were shrouded again as her gaze fell into the pit, where was a densely packed mass of citizens, all in good humour, because of so being packed, and ready to applaud all comers upon the stage.

For a moment Luke stood and forgot his heart-beating, and his task; but he was called sharply to himself by the prompter's call of "Clear the stage," and he had but time for a glimpse at Tillotsons' box; he saw they were comfortably settled in, Mark standing behind his sister, she occupying the front seat, and sitting by her side David Shedden. A vacant chair was by Mark's side.

Luke wondered, as he went back to his room to give a last look at his dress, why the Professor was not by Lola's side; he saw that his seat too was empty, and the one behind Edith was also left vacant; but he had little time to think, the call boy's shrill voice yelled at the door, "Beginners ready!" and the low comedy man turned from his glass to

him, asking, "Am I all right?" Luke ran his eye over him, detected a bit of black where it ought not to be upon his cheek, assisted him to remove it, and sent him on to the stage. In a few moments he heard the tinkle of the curtain bell, and the hush down of the house. He took out his copy of the play, and looked over his first entrance, pacing the room as he did so. He knew that sometimes the whole thing vanished from the memory at the sight of the full house; then going to his overcoat pocket, he took a small flask from it, and pouring out into the cup a small quantity of brandy, drank it off. "Once in front," he muttered, "I shall be cool enough when started; what a nuisance this heart-beating is!" and he pressed his hand to his heart, as though he would force it to be still. He heard a roar go up from the house as the comedy man, who was an old favourite, made a hit; and his heart stilled down as for a moment his thoughts went from himself and his task; but the boy was at his door with the call, "Linden ready," and taking up a riding whip which he had to use in his entrance scene, he went round the stage at the back to the prompter's side, to await the cue for appearing.

In the front of the house all was good humour; but on such a night there were comedies, and farces, and tragedies being played in the audience.

Acts that seemed part of farce were but scenes in tragedies. Mild comedy was leading up to serious drama, and earnest action was tending to a farcical finish in the lives of many a one in that well-satisfied crowd. Little meetings had been arranged, little surprises had excited envy and jealousy. Little acts were being watched; tiny, trivial deeds, but full of weight in the onward life course of many a Greyboroughite.

Mark from his position could sweep the whole house with his glass; and whilst his sister and friend leant over and watched the play, he leant back and watched the house.

He knew most of the people there, and much of their history, and it amused him, instead of following the play, to note the expression upon certain faces, as the play sometimes moved the muscles of those faces from the usual lines imposed upon them in public. It was the usual crowd that he looked upon that Greyborough expected to see assemble on all special occasions. The Mayor and High Sheriff, both men

of money, for Greyborough must needs have a monied man for Mayor: nothing else was required, but money he must have. Education and culture were utterly unnecessary. Gentleness and charity could be dispensed with, but money for subscriptions, and above all for dinners and entertainments, must be forthcoming; and Mark smiled as he looked across to where sat the Mayor in his gold chain, and then swept his glass round, and rested his eyes upon many a civic aspirant to that gold chain, all of whom laughed in their sleeves at the present wearer of it for his boorish gruffness and local dialect.

“Ah,” thought Mark, “the reign of character has not yet begun in Greyborough. How all these people invert Burns’ lines, and cry out in their inmost souls:—

“Oh that the powers some giftie gie ’em
To see ourselves as we do see ’em.”

But his glass, as he so thought, had rested upon where he had before espied Lola and her pupil, and there it halted in its moving sweep around the house.

“How handsome the Signorina looks to-night!” he thought, “and how charming her friend!” Lola was lying back in her seat, her fan resting upon the left

of her bosom, whilst on the right the full contour of neck and bust displayed its shapely proportions to Mark's gaze. Edith was leaning forward, and, as he looked, he suddenly saw her deep eyelashes lift, the life shoot into those full, lustrous eyes, and the already deep colour darken in her cheeks.

A round of applause from many parts of the house made him look at the stage, to see Luke had made his first entrance; and Mark joined in the applause, and then once more turned his glass upon Edith's face.

Pleasure and delight certainly beamed in those eyes. "Ah," he thought, "if Luke marries her—and I suppose he will—we shall see her sitting beside him with the gold chain round him, for that's his aim. Well, he will be a cut above most of them; but surely she is worthy nobler aims." And as he so thought the quarry scene and the old minster rose before him, and her eyes left the stage and turned full upon him, and her whole neck and forehead became crimson. His thoughts had penetrated her mind; it was one of those moments when mind comes in contact with mind, silently and from a distance, without bodily contact; and to relieve her embarrassment he turned

quickly to the stage, and after a while leant forward and spoke to Shedden, who was intent upon the play.

"Your village beauty is proud of her *fiancé*."

"Is she his *fiancée*?" asked David quietly, as though he did not wish Miss Tillotson to overhear.

"I suppose so," said Mark. "But I will find out from Luke positively, to set your mind at rest. From her present bearing, I should say yes."

"But if Waddington becomes successful, he may look higher," said David.

"So, so. You gauge him like that, eh?" replied Mark, "for your own miserable pleasure."

David was going to answer Mark's banter; but a look from Madge quieted them both, and they turned their attention to the play.

The end of the prologue was approaching. Luke's stage father-in-law in embryo was being proved forger and thief—a grabber of poor people's money in an illegal way. Luke held the stage, with all the characters around him, his stage *fiancee* clinging to him, and begging him to forget the engagement just made, ere her father was a felon. But as the curtain prepared to descend, Luke declares, "she may be the

daughter of a felon, but she shall be an honest man's wife."

"So mote it be," muttered Mark, as he turned quickly round as the curtain fell amidst roars of applause, saying to his sister, "I'm going to bring Miss Treverton round to you; she can watch the play better from here."

Mark left the box, and made his way round to the door that led down to the seat where Lola and Edith were sitting. As it was opened for him and he entered, Mr. Penaluna, who had made so late an appearance at the Signor's the evening Luke had spoken about the tickets, came up behind him and sidled in with him. He was late. Dolly generally was late, but he followed Mark down to where their friends were, and slipped quietly into the seat behind Edith.

As Mark approached, Lola instinctively turned to him, and saw Dolly leaning towards her from behind; but she heeded him not, but holding out her hand to Mark, said in German, "Do sit down, if but for a moment, or that terrible Herr will come into this seat," and with a pressure of the hand she drew him down beside her.

"I came to take Miss Treverton round to my sister," said Mark.

"Then you must remain here," answered Lola peremptorily; "I cannot be left alone with that infliction behind me."

"I cannot let Miss Treverton go round alone," quietly replied Mark, and holding out his hand to Edith, said in English, "I came to ask you to come round and see my sister; she thinks you can watch the play better from the spare seat we have, if the Signorina will let you come."

"Nur unter bestimmten Bedingungen," said Lola.

"Ich will zurück kommen," answered Mark, adding in English, "I will bring you back again when this play is over. I expect the *jeune premier* will come round then, as I see he is not in the next piece. Come, I see my sister looking across to us. Will you come?"

"Ah, Miss Tillotson is bowing. You will be very agreeable in her box; do go."

Adolphus Penaluna's weak blue eyes quite sparkled as he saw Edith rise, and Mark lead her out of her seat and disappear; and he leant over to Lola, who had ignored him, saying,—

"I'm awfully late; lost my collars. My landlady's an awful nuisance. I'm awfully sorry."

Lola threw back her head and looked up into his face, poor Dolly's eyes being transfixed by the full form of neck and bust beneath him, above which flashed, half scornfully, half laughing, the deep dark eyes.

"Why didn't you lose your cuffs as well?" she asked.

"Now that's unkind—awfully unkind;" and a blush rose over Dolly's face, as Lola turned round to see Mark re-entering. She moved her seat, letting Mark take her place, so that Penaluna was immediately behind her.

"You have settled my pupil comfortably down, I see," she said, as Mark took his seat; "and Mr. Shedden is in full chat with her."

Mark looked across, and saw that David had drawn back his chair from the front of the box, and was chatting somewhat fervidly with Edith, whose figure could only be half seen.

"If she is your pupil, she is his model, I think," replied Mark; "and I suppose it is necessary for artists to study their models as they do a landscape—in every mood."

"He has never painted your sister," suggestively remarked Lola. "He has become quite animated. It is to be hoped Mr. Waddington will not cast his eyes into that box and be upset in his part. Don't you think he played well? Do you go abroad again this year?" she ran on.

"No," answered Mark. "I intend having a few weeks with my sister in some quiet Cornish village. She loves the sea, and is always better for the change."

"Don't you think she wants more life? Take her with you to our Bohemia; amuse her with gaiety and sensations."

"She is not strong," replied Mark.

"*Elle rêve, mais pas de l'amour, je crois,*" lightly and lowly said Lola.

"*Non, elle rêve de la poesie,*" answered Mark.

"Ah, I forget; in England *l'amour* is a crime. Heigho! and so one reads poetry as an antidote. But English books don't know what *l'amour* means," she ran on, sinking back in her seat as she spoke, but looking fully into Mark's face.

"And do French?" he asked.

"At least they tell us some truth."

"Such as that one did, I saw you reading that night in Dresden."

"Ah, you have not forgotten our quiet little chat, and you have read the book?"

"No, I have not. You have not lent it to me."

"You might have bought it. Shall I lend it you?" she asked quickly. "It's very wicked;" and she flashed a look from her eyes that made Mark lower his, in spite of her handsome face and fair neck and rounded bust that his eyes rested upon.

"I am curious to read it," he quietly said.

"Then when a certain lady returns it to me, if you will call you shall have it."

"You have lent it to a lady?" asked Mark; and his eyes instinctively flashed across to where he saw David still in earnest chat with his fair maid of the mill, Madge leaning back, apparently listening to their talk.

"No, I have not lent it, but a certain lady took it. But I do not think you could guess who I mean; and I must not tell, of course. All Greyborough would be shocked."

"There goes the curtain," said Mark, as the bell rang. "I will certainly call for the book;" and he

leant forward to watch the play apparently, but inwardly to wonder if Edith Treverton's mind was being poisoned by some stuff about illicit amours, and had his warning to the Signorina been unheeded? He would get round to their box at the end of the play, and find out if she knew aught of such a book. As he thus thought, he saw his sister make way for her to draw nearer to the front, her face being turned to the stage; but as Shedden brought forward her chair, Mark caught at one view the two faces of Edith and his sister—the one pale, thoughtful, calm, the other flushed, excited, her eyes liquid and lustrous, as he saw her take her seat and thank David, who drew his own chair behind the two, giving them a full view of the stage.

Whilst Mark was watching this as the curtain rose, Mr. Penaluna screwed an eyeglass into his right eye, and, leaning forward, said to Lola,—

“Don't know what the first act was about, but s'pose I shall make it out.”

“Hush!” said Lola. “You must be quiet now.”

“Yes, yes; of course,” said Dolly in a whisper; “but, you know, couldn't talk whilst Tillotson kept on.”

“Hush!” was his sole answer. And Lola leant forward. Her head had been close to Dolly’s expanse of shirt front, where it had been some sense of comfort to him, and she bent over the front of the seat, bringing herself in a line with Mark, who seemed intent on the play.

Dolly muttered a profane exclamation, and the effort caused the eyeglass to fall with a sharp click upon his glazed bosom, beneath which was beating languidly a troubled, worried heart.

CHAPTER IV.

HUMAN NATURE AND ITS MIRROR.

THE first act of the play was of the broad farcical order, interspersed with some misery, which made the audience sufficiently noisy that conversation was easily possible amidst the laughs of gods and pitites. And as Luke Waddington did not appear in this act, Edith was less interested, and chatted with Madge during the scenes. Madge learnt much of Edith's life in their quiet abbey home, and learnt also how the Rev. Gridthorp had failed to keep his promise to go down and talk to the labourers on their rights. A question of Madge's as to how often Edith had met Mr. Gridthorp had brought forth this bit of news. Madge also learnt that during the summer or autumn Edith and her mother were going to pay a visit to their old home in Cornwall; and her description of the sculptured rocks, and mighty archways in cliffs, that were of such lovely colours that Edith seemed

to want words to describe them, made Madge long to see these cliffs and caves, where the Atlantic carved its architecture in such beauteous form and colour.

A roar from the house, as the low comedy man let fall cup and saucer, gave her an opportunity to lean forward and ask Shedden if he knew the spot of which Edith was speaking ; but he knew nought of it, and so she said,—

“I must ask Mark about it. We think of going into Cornwall or North Devon, but we have not settled where.”

“Oh, New Quay is quite near,” said Edith ; “you could stay there.”

“But could we not get rooms in your village ?” asked Madge.

“I dare say ; but it is very quiet. There are no amusements.”

“The sea and sky and cliffs would satisfy me,” said Madge.

But their talk was stopped by the audience hushing down, as a sad bit of history intervened between the comedy, and soon the act ended ; and as the curtain rose in the next, Luke entered as the now baronet, his wife in the prologue dead, whilst he was at sea

in the navy, and now in luxury he was married to another.

He was well received ; at least he would be a well-known man to a thousand people in Greyborough. His heart-beating had ceased. He felt at home on the stage, and could even venture to look round the house to where Edith had been sitting, to see Mark in her place by the side of the Signorina, and on casting his eyes to where he had last seen Mark he saw Edith in his place.

Their eyes met as he looked, and a blush and pleased smile suffused her face. The look nearly threw him off his guard ; but luckily they were just at a point when he had only to sit still and let his second wife, with whom he had to be desperately in love, play the fool with him, so that he had time to recall his thoughts ere his next speech. But the thought had flashed through his mind that Mark was rather bold to sit out a play by the side of the Signorina. Greyborough would talk.

But Mark was perfectly *insouciant* as to the talk of Greyborough. He led his life. Cynical as to good deeds that aimed at good pickings ; trying to see in men their true worth, regardless of their so-called

position; living to the true meaning of Bobbie Burns' motto, and not the inverted edition which he had said Greyborough adopted:—

“The man is but the guinea stamp,
The gowd's the rank for a' that.”

So ran Greyborough's acting version of this motto.

Mark was fond of these inverted quotations; the real words did for public quotation, but most men lived actually to the inverted edition. And he cared but little if the talk to-morrow morning was of his chat with the Signorina, for he felt a sense of satisfaction in looking across and seeing his sister chatting with Luke's fair friend, and at her ease now in watching him from her present place, where her face was hid from the general gaze.

Luke's part now gave him plenty of work, and the ease and quiet power with which he played it set Mark thinking of the man's capabilities, and of his almost boorish awkwardness of but a couple of years ago.

“*Il ira loin,*” he said quietly to his neighbour.

“Yes, and forget his past,” she replied, also in French.

“But he has not forgotten his past.”

"No ; but he hides it," replied Lola.

The baronet on the stage had hidden the fact that as lieutenant he had married a lawyer and a forger's daughter. Mark was thinking of Luke when he said he would go far, Lola of the baronet, though she felt that Luke had more reserve of power in him than she had suspected, and, as if to contrast the two, she turned round to Mr. Penaluna behind her and said very quietly,—

"He plays well."

"Yes, yes ; oh, yes."

Dolly was half dozing. He had tried to speak once or twice, but an uplifted hand had repressed him ; and as he did not understand the piece, having missed the prologue, he had nearly succumbed to sleep. In an hour or two's time his rooms would be full of those who knew he had a good cigar and not bad wine ; for Dolly's rooms were a rendezvous, and he was the "gowd," as Mark expressed it, and the "rank" which Greyborough youth respected, if they did laugh at his intellectual qualities.

The play went smoothly on, until one sudden *coup* is made, and Luke and the villain of the piece have their great scene. It was a trying moment for Luke,

for did the actress who was playing his supposed first wife fail to appear at the exact moment the whole effect was crushed. The audience were intent ; the attention was tense ; the whole house was silence, save where the storm was culminating on the stage ; and as Luke is told that his first wife he believed long dead is alive, and she by his side, for whom his love is so great, is but his mistress, he rushes forward to choke the words down the throat of his enemy, but is confronted by the entering figure of his dead first wife's sister, induced by the villain to assume her character.

The moment was electric, and as Luke shrank back from the sight he felt the terror of the situation ; the part had entered into him, and as the curtain fell a roar rose from the house of one storm of applause. Shouts of " Waddington ! " arose from pit and gallery ; and as his name resounded from all sides in her ears, Edith shrank back in the box, her whole face crimson, and her eyes glittering with pleasure ; for she remembered the lad she had strolled up the country lanes with, and knew how his own energy had given him skill and culture. She watched the curtain, and several came in front, but not Luke—the

comedy man and the villain ; but at last, after a wait, in which the cries of " Waddington ! " were redoubled from the pit, he came slowly on, and at the centre of the stage bowed, looking forward to where Lola was very perceptibly applauding, and Mark also ; his eyes dwelt on Lola, and then he passed on off the stage, raising them for a second to the box where sat Edith ; but she was still shrunk back, and he only saw the pale face of Madge and the applauding hands of Shedden.

" She might have looked out," he muttered, as he went to his dressing-room to prepare for the third act ; " the Signorina was clapping vigorously. That woman's a brick ; Tillotson is sitting it out with her." But as Luke began his changing he forgot the reticence of Edith, and the applause of Lola, in the self-satisfaction of his triumph. What now about the poor little chap at the mill, all dusty and floured, pulling about sacks of corn, or watching the flow of the meal as it ran softly into the bags beneath ? He had played the baronet on the mimic stage, and been applauded for his insight into the character ; " and what the deuce was there to prevent him playing something like it in real life ? "

Luke's head was too full of his air-castles for him to hardly notice the comedy man, who was busy bringing himself down to a street musician's garb ; a sad, thin-faced, pumped-out and wearied man in reality, but one who made others laugh immoderately.

In the front the house was soon getting impatient for the curtain to go up, but there was one who would have been quite content had it remained down for yet an hour, for he was chatting comfortably to Miss Tillotson and Edith in the privacy of the box ; and during this long wait he had time to inquire how the work went on with the little book, and whether Miss Tillotson had rendered into English any more of the thought-enduing verses ; and he heard of her visit to the Raphaellis, and the views inspected there, and their meeting with Miss Treverton. Edith sat more enwrapt in her own thoughts than listening, until Madge turned to her, saying, " But Miss Treverton leaves us to-morrow, I think."

" Then I shall miss the pleasure of seeing you sometimes when I am sketching. I wish I might sketch the abbey, as I have done the mill," he continued. " Your brother, Miss Tillotson, gives me a warm description of its beauty."

"It often is sketched," said Edith quietly.

"Don't be surprised some day to see me maligning it in paint and body colour, and coming to beg a little water for my colours."

"It must be very romantic," said Madge.

"Mother says it is more rheumatic than romantic," said Edith, "but mother is always very matter of fact. It is a lovely old spot"; and in her love for her old home her eyes were unveiled and looked out fully into David's with a free, ingenuous look that made him silent, and set Madge a-thinking of the hints she had heard her brother drop of his friend's admiration of this pretty country girl, whose full colour and excitement, and brightened eyes, added to her beauty. And as she thought, she turned away and leant over the box, looking out, but seeing not the crowded mass of humanity beneath her. Her thoughts were self-concentrated and upon her own future.

But a hush came over the house, for the prompter's bell for the curtain was heard, and as it rose Edith leant forward, for she saw Luke was in the opening scene.

The play went smoothly on ; the plot to foist upon the baronet the poor sister as his dead wife, the

daughter of the forger, is laid bare, and of course all ends happily. The mimic play was over, and the curtain fell upon the characters all ranged nicely upon the stage ; but this amateur night in the old theatre at Greyborough had set loose in the minds of three of the characters with whom this history is concerned springs of thought leading on to action, that strangely influenced their lives and the lives of many around them.

But if the play was over the entertainment was not yet ended ; a farce was to follow, and ere the curtain went up on this, Luke had forsaken the baronet's garb, and, once again himself, had come round to take the seat which had been retained for the Professor, but which had not been filled.

Mark rose and shook hands with him as he entered, saying, " Miss Treverton is in our box ; I will go and fetch her ; " adding, " Congratulate you," in a half-whisper.

Luke slid quietly into the seat Mark had left, and heard one or two whispers near him, " That's the baronet," and he had to reply to various nods and recognitions from many around him ; but Lola leant towards him, and in a low, expressive tone, said,

"You charmed me. I'm delighted with your success."

"Thanks," was his reply, as he looked across to the box where Edith was sitting. Mark was just entering; he saw him stoop down and speak to her, but at the moment the curtain rose upon the after piece, and instead of coming round to them, he saw Mark shift his position, so that he was standing out of their sight by Edith's side, whilst Miss Tillotson and Shedden, seated in front, were watching the stage.

"Mr. Tillotson does not seem to be coming back," he said to Lola as the farce went on.

"Does not want to interrupt now they have begun, or perhaps he is happier where he is."

"He was happy here, it appears, the whole of the evening," was the rejoinder.

"Yes, whilst you were on the stage; but we can surely do without him now. My pupil seems to be quite *en famille* with them."

"Glad of it," replied Luke curtly. "She knows few enough good people down at the Abbey."

"Mr. Shedden has been very attentive."

"Has he?"

"You are cool-blooded."

"Not always," said Luke ; and he turned his eyes fully round to Lola's face, with an expression of strange meaning.

"Ah, you Saxons—and you are a Saxon—are always so calculating and reserved."

"Except when a pretty Southerner plays the fool with us."

"And even then you can play the fool as you did on the stage just now with your pretty young wife, and soon forget all about it, and her you played the fool with."

"One may play too deeply to forget too easily," came the answer *sotto voce*, though the uproar of the house, as the broad fun of the farce proceeded, made conversation unheard, except by those quite close to the talkers ; and only one had heard anything of this talk, and that one was Dolly Penaluna, who was leaning forward enjoying the wild fun of the farce, but hating Luke, and Tillotson too, for the talk that the Signorina gave them. And when he heard Luke talking of playing deeply, he joined in with,—

"Who ever caught you playing deeply, Waddington ? A trifle too cautious a chicken you are."

"I'm not a fool, Dolly," was the sarcastic answer.

"No? Then don't talk in public about playing the fool. I didn't say you were one. That fellow's awfully funny;" and Dolly's eyeglass went up again to watch the fun on the stage, and the two before him were silent, until the play was over, and all were crowding out, cloaking and enwrapping, and in the crush Mark brought up Miss Treverton to Luke, saying, "They began before we could get round."

Luke and Edith shook hands, but in the crowd she could not say one word of her pleasure, her eyes only looked out to Luke's full of admiration—blushing satisfaction. She heard in the crushing crowd whispered interjections of "That's Linden," or "There's Waddington"; but she was borne on into the cloak-room, and from thence out into the corridor, where she found Mark and his sister and Luke, all waiting for her and the Signorina. She was to stay at the Professor's house that night, and in the morning it had been re-arranged old Mr. Waddington was to bring in her luggage for her departure to her old abbey home.

The two men left them to seek carriage and cab, leaving Shedden as their guard for the moment; and Madge found an instant to whisper to Edith how

glad she was to have met her, and begged her to call upon her when next she was in town, adding, "I wish you would write to me sometimes, and let me hear of your life in your pleasant, quiet country."

"I should not know what to write about," said Edith; "but I will gladly write if you will give me a letter in reply. You will always have something to tell me."

She was interrupted by a voice shouting up the corridor, "Mr. Tillotson's carriage," followed by a second shout of, "Mr. Waddington's carriage." They found the carriages awaiting them as they reached the door, and as Luke handed in Edith with a not unsatisfied smile at the tout who had had the wit to announce his cab as his carriage, he nodded good-night to the Tillotsons; but Mark left his sister and friend for a moment, and came up to shake hands with Edith and her chaperone: "A very pleasant and," turning to Luke, "successful evening. We must have a chat over it soon. Good-bye, Miss Treverton; don't forget to remember me to your father;" and with a wave of the hand was gone.

CHAPTER V.

DRIFTING.

LOLA lay back in the cab as they drove away from the crowd and lights, dissatisfied and disappointed. She had arranged a little supper, and she had hoped Tillotson would have made one of the party ; but in spite of her suggestions that his friend would take care of his sister, he had persisted in asserting he could not leave her, as Shedden would probably wish to catch the last train ; and yet Shedden had driven off with them. Lola could not understand this devotion of Mark to his sister, and it increased her dislike for one who, though she had grown enthusiastic over her description of scenes that interested her, had shown no symptoms of reciprocity for Lola's proffered friendship. The country girl could be taken round to sit with her, but the music and foreign teacher could not share that honour ; and as these thoughts ran through her mind, a sardonical laugh came to her lips, that, suddenly remembering she was not alone,

she had to explain by referring to one of the funny scenes of the play.

Shedden did not catch his train that night. Arrived at the home of the Tillotsons, he not unwillingly allowed himself to be drawn within its doors. The house was very silent, but a light came from Madge's work-room, and Mark said, "Come into this little room, it is cosy here ; and you have a good half-hour for the twelve train." Madge threw off her wraps and whispered an order to the servant for coffee, whilst her brother and his friend had gone to the window, that was still uncurtained, and looked out on the calm, soft, starlight night.

"How calm this is after the hubbub and seething of those crowds!" said Shedden, as they stood looking out on to upland and valley. "Why cannot we do without all this crowding together?"

"But, man ! you enjoy this," exclaimed Mark, "the more for, that ;" throwing his left palm forward towards the still night beyond, and his right over his shoulder to imply the town they had left behind.

"But if our towns go on spreading, we shall soon have none of 'this' left, as you term it. The whole

country will be built on, and nothing will be left for the maintenance of the people."

"Time enough then for the main tenants to go too, and people Central Africa," answered Mark flippantly. "Come, here's coffee; we must not get at once into arguments in this little room."

"No fear of arguing when you answer with puns. That is the effect of such plays as to-night's, eh?"

"Oh, a very fair play," said Mark, as he took a cup from his sister, and drawing a couple of chairs near her seat, the two men sank into them as he continued: "Don't you think so, Madge?"

"I enjoyed it; but Miss Treverton's presence I think made me feel it more. Her sympathy was electrical. How handsome she is, Mark!"

"You, a woman, say so," exclaimed her brother; "then she must be indeed handsome."

"I doubt if she knows it," interposed Shedden; "it is a curious contrast, her quiet retiring mood and Waddington's self-assertion."

"You were not very retiring to-night, Mark, to sit out the whole play with your friend, Miss Raphaelli. What will Greyborough say to-morrow?" asked his sister.

"What it will," answered Mark. "A true Grey-boroughite is very doubtful to whom even he dare speak."

"They fear being lowered from their pedestals," interjoined Shedden.

"Yes, but what a weak, tiny pedestal it must be you are perched on, if to speak to a shabby person smashes it."

"But your friend was by no means shabby," answered his sister.

"In appearance, or in mind?" answered Mark. "Give me some intellect, and I don't care what position people hold; intellect is real position."

"Say rather character," interposed Madge.

"Ah, Sis, you've been reading Emerson, and he is right. Character includes mind, body, and soul; and the truest characters should rule the world, but they don't."

"They will some day," came the subdued answer.

"Then comes the millennium, Madge."

"How much do we help the reign of character?" asked Shedden; "we don't even stop and chat to a poor man we know to be of the noblest character, and a rich blackguard every one chats with."

Madge looked across to David, as he spoke, with a thanking look ; it was one of her own thoughts he had uttered. "Yes," she exclaimed, "if character, and talent, and genius ignored money ; plutocracy would have but little weight."

"But we are plutocrats, Madge — so they say ; and we are all at least trying to be these unpleasant people as hard as we can. But isn't this getting rather too stiff an after-theatre chat ?"

"It is a change from the comedy, and change is the charm of life. If we could now but have had a little music," said Shedden, pointing to the open piano ; "but Miss Tillotson is tired, and I must be going," he added, rising.

"You must come early some other evening for that, but the Raphaellis' is the place for music," said Mark, as his sister wished his friend good-night.

When in the hall, Shedden saw he had missed his train, and so had a four-mile walk before him.

"I'll have a stroll part of the way ; it's a lovely night," said Mark ; and the two men went out and passed on towards the town, and through the road where the Signor lived. Lights were still burning in his rooms. Had they but passed ten minutes earlier,

they would have witnessed a little scene between two who had taken opposite parts in the evening's drama.

Luke had then just quitted the house, and as he crossed the road, he saw a figure standing, looking towards the door which had just been shut behind him by the Signorina herself. The man wore a double-peaked soft travelling cap, and a loose over-cloak buttoned up round his throat. For a moment Luke did not recognise him, but, as he drew near, he saw it was Penaluna.

"Why, Dolly!" he exclaimed, "where have you been? Thought you had some fellows at your place."

"Did you?" muttered Dolly. "You are not there, anyhow."

"Well, no," answered Luke. "I'm afraid the little music we have been having would hardly suit your clique."

"Has the Signorina been playing to you, then?" exclaimed Dolly. "What the deuce do you do here at this time of night?"

"Why, Dolly, you turned inquisitor? The Signorina has a right to play to me if she likes. I doubt if she would to you," he added, *sotto voce*.

But Dolly caught the words, lowly as they were uttered, and fumbling inside his overcoat he drew out his eyeglass, without which in his eye he had no courage, and then looking Luke as straight in the face as his half-closed eyes permitted, he said,—

“Look here, Waddington! you called me a fool to-night before her, and I won’t let you or any man call me a fool before her.”

“But I did not call you a fool, Dolly.”

“Damn it, don’t call me Dolly.”

“Adolphus, then.”

“What idiots my godfathers were!” muttered Dolly, and for the moment he seemed to forget his rage, but his eyeglass falling from his eye, the effort of screwing it in again brought him back to his anger against Luke. “I won’t be called a fool in public, anyway to make her laugh at me. What the devil right have you to be in that house now? You think me a fool, but I’m not such a weak-kneed idiot as you think; and you had better not make me your enemy.”

“Enemy!” exclaimed Luke, astonished at the sudden awakening of a man he thought always asleep. “Why, I hope you will be my friend. Why, I said

I, wasn't a fool in the theatre just now ; and I should be a fool to make you my enemy. I want you and your people to help this new venture of ours down west."

"What did you come up here for to-night ?" muttered Dolly, persisting only in finding out Luke's reason for being where he was denied oftentimes the entry, though at other times he seemed for the moment a *persona grata* with its occupants.

"My friend, Miss Treverton, is staying there to-night ; she goes home to the old abbey to-morrow, and so the Signor asked me up to supper. Now, what cause have you to be annoyed ? Why, I did not know you were hit so hard. You need not trouble about me, Dolly. Eh ? hang it, I can't help the old name coming. It's Mark Tillotson you had better look after. I'm poor, he's rich, and so are you, Dolly. You could buy up two of him. There, say we are friends, and I'll stroll back with you ; but I mustn't stay, for I have to be hard at it to-morrow."

"Why didn't you say all that before ?" asked Dolly glumpily.

"You were in such a rage, you did not let me speak. Come, you've nothing against me"; and Luke

linked his arm in the reluctant Dolly's, who gave a long look at the windows, where lights were still burning downstairs.

Luke had not been well satisfied with the hour he had spent where Dolly was so enraged to find him. Lola had been all gaiety and flattery, and after the little supper had played brilliant bits from snatches of operas, chatting to Luke the whole time ; whilst Edith had been almost silent, only speaking but rarely ; and when the Signorina, who looked superb in her low-necked dress, her rounded arms bare to the shoulders, jumped up from the piano where Luke was standing, and forced her into the seat gently, but with persistent force, she had played a tender little melody, that was, Luke thought, a wretched school-girl piece. Lola had looked up into his face chatting and laughing as she played. Edith kept her eyes fixed on the keys, and it was after this that Luke declared he must go, though Lola assured him it was not late.

“What a girl she is ! no go in her ; she looked pretty though, but Lola was superb. Pity that woman hasn't got money !” were the thoughts he was thinking as he drew near to Dolly.

It was some ten minutes after Luke and Dolly had passed on, linked arm in arm, that Lola saw Edith up to her room, whilst she herself went down into the little drawing-room, and threw herself upon the couch.

“Oh, these wretched English, why don't they ever forget themselves? Why was I, with all this Southern blood boiling in my veins, put up here amongst these calculating, cold——Oh, for a good dance! a wild race with a man that was a man! How that Waddington stood and looked, sheepish!—he was afraid to move. If we had been alone! Ah, ah! my little 'pupil doesn't know her Luke yet. I can't stand this room, it's suffocating;” and Lola jumped up and turned out the gas, drew up a blind and opened the window, and let the cool air blow in upon her white neck and bosom. “Why did not Tillotson come in?” she muttered. “Hypocrite! as though he would not have better liked to come here than go home with that sister of his”; and she withdrew into the room, now dark, with a suppressed sigh that turned into a great gasp as though for air. “I must go out,” she suddenly said, “and get some breathing space;” and she lightly opened the hall door, and stepped out into

the clear night, where far above, unclouded, the stars were glittering in steely light. "Ha!" she gasped, "one can breathe here"; and she walked forward past the small grass plot to the gate. As she did so, a figure sharply turned the corner of the road but a few yards off, and quickened its steps as the figure of Lola was seen. She saw it not, but was leaning on the gate, gazing far up into the sky, when "The Signorina will suffer for this," fell on her ears, in a low tone.

"Mr. Tillotson!" she exclaimed, starting. "You said you must see your sister home."

"And so I have, and now must see you home also" he added; "for though the wind is south, you will kill yourself out here without a wrap."

"And what would that matter?" she said, sharply turning her eyes, that seemed lustrous and liquid in the night, full upon him.

"Signorina, you must go indoors," said Mark; and he opened the gate, and laid his hand lightly upon her arm. A tingling thrill rushed through his whole frame as he felt the contact with the warm palpitating flesh, that he expected to find chilled with the night air. He gently drew her towards him, and asked, "Why are you out here, and so late?"

"Oh, I couldn't breathe indoors. I have—but how can you have been home with your sister? What excuse have you for not coming back with us? You came from the other way."

"Shedden missed his train, and I wanted some fresh air like yourself, and have just left him. But, really, you must go in."

"Why?" she asked. "The night is quite warm."

"But you have no wrap;" and he looked at her low dress.

"That is the comfort, to feel the wind playing around one;" and she seemed imperceptibly to draw nearer to Mark, as he stood, his hand still resting on her arm.

He deemed the situation a strange one, but by no means unpleasant; "but the girl will catch a terrible cold," he thought, and he took her arm higher up, where his fingers seemed to be swathed in the soft, yielding flesh, and saying, "I must see you inside the door before I go," he led her towards the door.

"To come out again when you are gone," she said, laughingly now, as she turned her face again towards him. "Fate wills we should meet at odd hours, Mr. Tillotson."

"I must be thankful to fate, but your fate will be bronchitis if you stay here."

"Which means you want to just be polite, and be off, eh?" she replied.

"I don't want you to be ill," he answered.

"Is that true?" she asked.

"Indeed, it is."

"Then I will do as you wish, for the tone of your voice shows you mean it. But you must come inside. I have Miss Treverton with me, you know;" and she went slowly on into the house, Mark halting at the door. "Oh, you must come in; she is in here;" and she led the way into the room she had just left. "Oh, she has gone, and left me in the dark. But wait a moment; you must have that book now. I put it ready, as I hoped you would come back with us. Why didn't you?" and Lola came close to him in the dim light of the faint stars.

Her warm breath, and the soft essence that exhaled from her whole figure, seemed to envelop him, and draw him down to her. "You would not," she added, in a low, soft tone.

Unconsciously, irresistibly, Mark's arm had encircled this warm, electrical, palpitant form, and drawn it to

him. "I would," he said, "but I had given my word. You will forgive me?"

"If you will promise to come some other evening."

Mark did not answer. But as her face had lifted itself up to his, with those full, rich eyes looking into his own, he drew her close to him, and . . . Lola responded to his kisses. "That is a pleasantly sealed promise. I will come," he said, after a somewhat long pause. "But where is Miss Treverton? You said she was here."

"Oh, she is gone upstairs, I expect."

"It is lucky she is not here," laughed Mark. "But I'm keeping you from her. Now, promise you will not go out again."

"If you exact it."

"I do," he said emphatically.

"Then I promise."

Mark had drawn himself away from her, and thought was returning, and self-control with it. "Good-night, Signorina," he said; "I fear I have been wrong."

"And I hope you are sorry," she said laughingly. "Ah, I know you," she added, as she took his proffered hand. Then suddenly withdrawing it, she

went to a corner of the room, and drew from the foot of a music stand the book he had seen her reading at Dresden. "I know a little what life means," she added significantly, as she handed it to him. He placed it under his arm. She went quietly with him to the door, and Mark was once more out in the silent night, with this book she had so wished him to read as his companion. "A queer girl, but irresistible under such circumstances," said Mark. "Sis would say I was losing myself if she knew of this little adventure. What a piece of work is woman!"

CHAPTER VI.

INFLUENCE.

LUKE WADDINGTON felt an increase of power within him after his success on the amateur night in the old theatre at Greyborough. It was not the momentary applause, or the newspaper praise that followed, that satisfied him ; but the proof that he had powers within him which he knew he could direct on to fortune. He had felt that night the crowd swaying to his mind, and he inwardly resolved that people who came in contact with him should be bent to his purpose.

He looked round, and saw the hard-headed, dogged, persistent boors, that were wealthy simply because they set one aim before them, and pressed on, regardless of all tenderness or compassion. When wealth was gained, then was time enough to change your tactics, and be generous with the surplus that ever increased. But these men had all made one mistake. Their early and middle life was stamped irrevocably

upon their faces, and on their tongues ; people fell down before their money, but laughed (not always too carefully) behind their backs at the possessors of even that power-giving and righteous-making article. Luke knew better than this ; and as a few months after the theatre night he sat in his new office, with its bright new furniture, and brass fittings, and soft carpets, and brand-new, carefully covered bright-red ledgers around him, he leaned back in his chair sometimes, and thought he was not going to make this fault his. The theatre, and the power it gave of speaking to an audience, should be the step to the platform, and the educated tone and expressive phrase should be his, and then—— Ah, then ! Where was the limit to his onward course ? But money, money must be got first. Nobody's anything without money, and when this set of books is full we shall have it, and he placed his hand affectionately on the soft polished leather of a ledger. But he did not open it, but fell back again. Strange, for Luke Waddington, he was in a dreaming mood, and his thoughts went down to the old abbey, and to his boy life with Edith.

“ I wonder whether she'll ever come out strong like Lola. That woman would carry everything before

her if she had money. Edith's so quiet. She'd look well, but, hang me ! if she'd speak. Fancy that night, up at Lola's, her playing that spoony little bit, instead of a dashing thing, to show she was equal to her teacher. Well, it's a rum sort of engagement, without being one at all. If I'm going to make money, she's hardly the wife for me. But can't tell what might turn up, and old Treverton ought to be worth something, what with his mining and farming. 'Well, well, bide a wee,' as the Scotch say. Anyway, she must stick to her music and French ; pity but what she could get about a bit more.--I'm wasting time," he suddenly said aloud ; and he started up, touching a bell, at the sound of which a clerk appeared from an outward office.

"You can post this ledger now," he said ; "and, remember, I'm engaged, unless to anything really particular." And as the clerk shouldered the heavy tome and went out, he unlocked a drawer, drew out a small locked-up cash-book, and, opening it, was quickly engaged in casting up columns of figures.

Matters were going most favourably with the Universal Building Society. A shrewd set of men had become directors, some of the sharpest men in

Greyborough. Shares were being taken up freely and depositors and borrowers were rapidly increasing. Already large plots of ground in the suburbs of the city had been marked out for building, and the society was lending money on the houses being run up there by speculative builders ; the land that until now had been but pasturage, was thus bringing in large sums of money to its owners, who were on the board of directors. Luke had been instrumental in getting the building on these estates started, and had benefited accordingly ; his directors declaring inwardly they had got the right man, and they must make it worth his while to stick to them ; Luke declaring inwardly that he must take care it was worth his while to stick to them. He mixed and moved about amongst men whom a short time ago he had thought to be on pedestals far above himself. He assumed and held to an equality amongst them, and as his directors yielded, and even encouraged this assumption of equality, others in the city did not resent it in his presence, though they talked over the "cheek" and coolness of young Waddington behind his back, hints of which talk often floated into Luke's ears. But Luke felt his growing power, and simply noted

any phrase that was really offensive, for future action. The more insight Luke gained into the city men of Greyborough, the more he learned that one or two motives moved most of them. There were, perhaps, a few exceptions ; but greed, bound by public opinion ; and self-advancement, were the two principal "virtues" that made Greyborough advance. Some scheme for self-advancement and self-profit was magnified into a scheme for the good of the town ; and the magnifier, if he carried out his aims, reaped double profit, the furthering his own ends, and the praise of devoted citizenship. Luke quickly saw all paths to city honour open unto him. Some years of work perhaps lay before him ; but when he looked round at the strangely ignorant and uncultured men, learned only in the art of money making, who ruled Greyborough, he knew he could eclipse the lot ; only he must get money, for without that they would soon "sit on him," as he expressed it.

He worked steadily on with his figures for some hours, until lunch time approached, and one of the clerks tapped at the door and brought in a couple of small account books he had been preparing for Luke's checking.

"Who goes to dinner now?" he said, looking up.

"I do, sir," answered the clerk.

"Then tell Freshfield I'm out until two o'clock, unless any country new depositor or any one wishing to take shares should come in; then he can come in and let me know, but not to say I am here."

"Very well, sir," answered the clerk; and as he left the office, Luke got up and shut the door after him, and opening a drawer he drew out a sandwich tin, and taking up a still folded newspaper, he opened it to read as he eat his sandwiches.

He had not read far, when he threw the paper down with, "Old Gridthorp as usual figuring away in the papers. A pamphlet now on the 'Rights of Labour and the Duties of Government.' Pity but what he'd write on the 'Rights of Government and Duties of Parsons,' if all's true of the miserable life he leads the poor wretches he gets to teach in his house and schools. He never gets a servant to stay six months, so they say; and the poor woman that keeps the infant school has to live on thirty pounds a year, and no pickings. Gridthorp's a humbug, but they give him plenty of room in the papers. Look at this now, nearly a column. Oh, of course!" exclaimed

Luke, "the Government's wrong and the Opposition's right; they 'judiciously assume the proper functional powers of true government, helping to the fullest the poor and oppressed, the labourer and the worker,' do they?" ejaculated Luke. "Well, if old Gridthorp says so, I suppose it's true. I thought they talked about it. What a worrying, restless man he is! but he's got some little game in his head; he doesn't work for nothing. Barton is his third living, and all his 'calls' are to bigger screws. Pity these beggars don't get 'called' to smaller screws sometimes. Gridthorp never works for nothing."

Luke turned over the paper as he thus dismissed Gridthorp as he thought, but after a while upon another page in a column of local news he again lit upon his name. This time it was an announcement that the Rev. Mr. Gridthorp had kindly presented a prize to the volunteer corps for the man whom the colonel could recommend for "prompt obedience to orders, a quality so necessary, as the rev. gentleman neatly expresses it, in soldiers." "Yes, and in everybody that's under his thumb in any way," added Luke to the words of the newspaper.

"Why, that's the card I had for this afternoon—a

platform ticket. I'll go to the distribution, just to see what use he turns this to. Wouldn't this paper set the pater off! Well, I've had enough of Gridthorp"; and he threw the paper aside.

The prize distribution to which the paragraph referred, was an annual event in Greyborough; and when Luke made his appearance upon the platform, some ten minutes before the appointed time, he found it nearly filled with the heads of the town, and their wives and children—for the soldiers were a pretty sight for the youngsters. He hardly found a place, but half-way to the back he espied Mark and his sister, and Shedden; and as he nodded, Shedden made a sign that they could make room for him, so he passed amid the front seats, and found a place next to Mark.

"So you are come to see the [soldiers?" said Mark.

"No, to see Gridthorp," replied Luke in a whisper.

"So are we," came the *réplique*. "Madge here is a great admirer of Mr. Gridthorp."

"I can't help studying him," said Madge in a half whisper, "and I hope I shall admire him. At present I'm rather doubtful."

"You must not come to me for assistance to that end," said Luke. "I have lived too near him."

"Exactly what I have been saying," interjoined Shedden. "But Miss Tillotson has made up her mind she ought to admire so great a philanthropist."

"And philanthropy never begins at home," joined in Mark.

The band of the regiment struck up a salute as Mark spoke, and the officers and their principal friends appeared on the platform, the Rev. Mr. Gridthorp bringing up the rear nearly, so that all the front seats were occupied before he had reached them ; but he arranged this by pressing quietly forward, and standing in front, until a polite civilian offered him a seat, which Mr. Gridthorp immediately accepted, unheeding that the kindly individual himself had to stand, until a corner was made for him on the edge of a most uncomfortable stool.

The table was covered with prizes of all descriptions, and the printed list of certificates and awards was long enough to suggest that every man in the regiment was a prodigy ; and the colonel's report assured all that this regiment of which he was the head was the best drilled, the most efficient, and he

felt assured would be the bravest regiment in time of danger that the annals of English history would ever have to describe. He pointed with pride to the long list of prizes, but omitted to remind them that true merit acts from a sense of duty and honour, without thought of reward.

Truly our prize-giving system teaches even our schoolboys to count up the money value of the prizes they shall win, and our athletes to note if a cup be real or Brummagem. Emulation for the simple, honourable yearning to do nobly, and honestly, and manfully, for right's sake, is carefully crushed by our schoolmasters and our leaders; and the pride of being first, purely for the pride of mastery, and the desire to use to the utmost the gifts within us, is lost in the question, what will the money gain be in kind or in coin?

So thought Mark as he watched the men come up and take their prizes from the hands of the lord who presented them. But this long task drew on towards the end, and at length came the moment for the colonel to announce to whom he had awarded the Rev. Gridthorp's "generous, kindly, and most appropriate gift." As the recipient's name was mentioned,

he stepped from the ranks, and marched up to the platform and stood at the salute, and Lord —— took up the prize, a handsome pair of binocular glasses, to hand to the winner, but he was stopped by the Rev. Mr. Gridthorp's stepping forward, and staying his hand, and saying, "I think, my lord, as this is a special gift, the man would prefer receiving it from the hands of the donor." The noble lord betrayed no signs of astonishment, but with an affable smile bowed to the rev. gentleman, and drew back; whilst the Rev. Mr. Gridthorp stepped into his place, and, holding his prize in his hands, said he had to thank the noble lord for allowing him to present his own prize with his own hands. He then stated his reasons for giving such a prize; the qualities such a gift must draw out; that obedience was the first law to be inculcated in all minds. The unfortunate prize-taker remained at the salute as stiffly as it is possible for an English volunteer to stand, for nearly five minutes; and then, with a shy glance at his colonel, and a thought that the reverend giver was, it appeared, only just warming up to his subject, he dropped his hand and stood at attention, gradually becoming ruddier in the face, as his own physical appearance was

dilated upon, and the value of true obedience was expounded. Twenty minutes by the clock did the speech last, and then Mr. Gridthorp reached out the prize he had held in his hands, and the man again saluted ; but it was still held by the reverend gentleman for some seconds, while he half turned and thanked the noble lord, and the commanding colonel, for having given him this opportunity to say a few words to men for whom he had an intense love.

There was great applause as he, bowing to the lord, who rose to resume his interrupted task, took his seat ; whether from relief or from praise, some may have doubted, but not Mr. Gridthorp.

The ceremony was now soon over ; and as the company passed out to the music of the corps, he was seen walking and chatting with the lord to whom he had given a rest in a tedious task.

"Madge," said Mark, as they gained the open air, "your Mr. Gridthorp's an arrant humbug."

"But look at the good he does," was the reply.

"Good ! Do you think any man has an atom of kindness in him that would make a fellow-creature so uncomfortable as he made that poor chap to-day ? The man's a humbug and a liar, for he lied when he

talked about his love for those men. I shall cut him."

"No, you won't, Mark ; he is helping us in a good work now."

"Why, Madge, you're beginning to believe in humbug ; that is a change. You used to kick against it. But what do you say about him, Shedden ?"

They had walked on a little way, and Luke and Shedden were a yard behind them, but the latter had overheard the brother and sister's words.

"Miss Tillotson has some reason probably for what she says," answered Shedden, in a hesitating, stammering fashion.

"Gridthorp has his reason, that's certain," exclaimed Luke ; "he means to be a bishop, if push and cheek will do it."

They halted at a turning as Luke spoke, and as he added, "I must be going this way," he shook hands with Mark and his sister. Shedden, too, bid them good-bye, as he asserted he was obliged to go Luke's way.

"What's come to Shedden lately ?" said Mark, as he walked on with his sister. "The man seems to have some weight on his mind ; he hardly speaks,

and when he does the words seem to choke him ; he stammers and flushes like a schoolgirl. Haven't you noticed it, Sis ? ”

Madge was walking on with her eyes downcast, and for a moment did not answer, but at last she said quietly : “ He was always reserved.”

“ Reserved, yes ; but stupid, no.”

“ He's anything but stupid,” said Madge decidedly.

“ Well, I don't know. Since his ‘ maid of the mill ’ has gone, he seems at least glum. Poor beggar ! it's to be hoped he's not bitten hard, as Luke there claims her. I must stir him up.”

“ Do you really think Mr. Gridthorp is the man Mr. Waddington thinks ? ” asked Madge, looking up, her face quite flushed.

“ You had better not set him up as an idol. Why, Madge, you seem quite agitated. Has Mr. Gridthorp's harsh, strident voice upset you ? it does me. After such an exhortation of religion I want a dose of worldliness. I shall just go and dive into a French novel, to take his hypocrisy out of my mind.”

“ Better come into my room and have a dose of the Mirza.”

Brother and sister, when they arrived home, each went to their own rooms, and Mark took out the book Lola had lent him months ago, but which he had not cared to commence ; whilst Madge, after sitting for some time at the open window, listening to the full notes of a blackbird in a near thicket, and calming her mind that had been agitated by a very different cause than that suggested by Mark, went to her desk, to look over some translations she had made, to help her in her task of suppressing emotion ; but one of the first she took up started her thoughts from herself to him whom her brother had thought had sent the life-blood flushing to her pale face. " Surely," she thought, " that harsh voice, and hard-lined, narrow, discontented face, suggests that Waddington is right ; " and she went again to the window, and as the soft summer wind wafted in to her, read over her attempt to give an English dress to the Mirza's words.

" Who happy is, is also good ;
 In every mien he shows it.
Who evil is, of evil mood,
 Bears his own pain and knows it.
Oh, thou in pious canting rage,
 Thy passions tight enchain thee.
Thou art not happy, art not sage,
 Thy cruel hate doth pain thee.

Who joyous is, full joy he brings ;
He grasps, whilst others crave it :
It comes from him, and on love's wings
Returns to him who gave it."

CHAPTER VII.

CONNECTING LINKS.

LUKE solaced himself for the infliction of egotistical selfishness he had endured from his pastor, as he ironically called Mr. Gridthorp, by quitting Shedden at a turning, and taking a short stroll which brought him back into the road where the Signorina lived ; and upon her he called, found her at home, and spent a very pleasant hour in her coquettish society, that put him in tune for a look into the theatre later on.

He had become exceedingly friendly with Lola of late, and saw more of her than when even Edith was studying under her care. Once when he had casually called, he had found Tillotson there, engaged in a heated discussion with the Professor upon political questions, and Lola received him with thankfulness, she said ; though he thought at first there was a tinge of annoyance in her greeting, but she commenced

chatting about Greyborough people, and left the Professor and Mark to fight out their differences.

For some little time after his midnight call upon the Signorina, Mark had not met her, and had studiously abstained from calling; but meeting her casually one day near her home, he had gone in, and the reminiscence of that night seemed to have given a sense of secret friendship between them which Mark thought was by any means unpleasant; and so now he had again become a frequent looker-in, for a little music and an argumentative chat with the Professor.

Matters pecuniary were improving with this gentleman; he had more pupils, and Lola had not troubled him much of late for money. Her teaching was increasing, and, as she told her father, it was largely owing to the friendship of the Tillotsons. The real secret of theirs and Luke's success was that certain industries in Greyborough were flourishing.

A wave of commercial prosperity that had swept over the country had, somewhat late, even touched that town. Pessimists said it had only come in for the afterflow of the wave, and doubted how long it would last this afterflow; but optimists affirmed Greyborough itself was looking up. Building was

increasing, new warehouses were being built, and all around were signs of prosperity. Even the Professor's concerts were being better attended, and he hardly lost anything by them, so that he considered the advertisement not too dear as it had been.

Lola had but few, if any, lady friends ; but at these concerts, that were some outlet to the passionate yearning for distinction that was so strong within her, musical amateurs would come into the ante-room and congratulate her upon her rendering of some difficult or delicate piece by Chopin or Beethoven. She felt in this Greyborough life as in a cage—pent, barred, and locked up. Sometimes she felt she must burst out ; but when she was upon a platform, interpreting the soul of some master mind, and feeling that all the men were admiring her beauty, and all the women envying her power, then she was satisfied and happy. In fiction she would have made the fortune of a novelist of the blood and murder school. In her moments of triumph she looked capable of anything, from administering in minute doses slow poison, to daggering off a rival in hot haste ; but in real life the exigencies of respectability kept her enthralled, though it was an enthraldom that some-

times reminded one of the sight of Vesuvius upon a soft spring night, when the mountain is quiet, and all is darkness over its summit, save at intervals, when there spreads out a deep ruddy glow, that gives fearful import of the fire beneath.

Mark Tillotson had seen that lurid glow, and sometimes doubted the expediency of venturing too much within its radius of warmth. Luke had never seen it, whilst poor Dolly Penaluna was fascinated and attracted by it. But Mark felt confident of his power to escape from danger, if danger there was in enjoying the society of a pretty girl, who was not merely a "ditto." A travelled, well-read, enthusiastic, and cultured musician, and type of character he thought Greyborough in its dulness ought to be thankful for ; but Greyborough, with its veneer of Christianity, held aloof from this foreigner. Gave her no homely society, patronised, but never *be-friended* her ; for truly she could say, as she did sometimes in her bitterness, she had not a friend in the world. And so, as an outlet for the hot blood and yearning for some warmer life that coursed through mind and veins, she revelled in French novels, such as the one she had lent Mark ; in which she thought she saw into the inner life that

was denied to her—the inner life of passion and pleasure, of body and of mind.

In England there was but one way to that life—through marriage; and there were two men who could give her much that she longed for—Tillotson and Waddington. The latter, not yet; but all Greyborough said, “he would be Mayor before many years had whitened his head.” Tillotson could do it now, but he was so cold and calculating; sometimes she doubted her power over him, and then would come the thought of that hot embrace on the theatre night, and she would laugh quietly, and if in her room, look at herself in the glass, and murmur, “There’s one way at least I can conquer him; he’s an honourable man.” But Luke’s audacity she admired,—the cool way in which he levelled the big guns of Greyborough to almost beneath him. He, the miller lad, not long since working in amongst the flour sacks, as she had heard Edith Treverton describe him. She liked to have Luke hovering round her, but she had never permitted him to fold her in his arms as Mark had done. There was one other steadfast admirer who could give her all she wished—Adolphus Penaluna, Esquire, as she ironically dubbed him: “but to be tied to such a

poor wretch ! well, if that ever came about I should make him live abroad, and then I could do as I liked. Why, Monaco, even with that half fool worrying me, would be better than this dull existence ; if he worried, I should get plenty to admire, and he would have to be quiet."

Her quick eyes had seen how Mark appeared to respect Edith Treverton, and as a tragedy personage she should at once have set to work to "remove" such an obstacle to her sole queening over this advantageous *parti*. But she had done nothing but one malicious little act, which she thought would have its effect upon Mark's admiration for Edith's character—a character he seemed to have taken under his charge ; for had he not cautioned her against lending her such works as she had now lent him ? Why should he care what books she read ? Waddington, who ought to be more interested in the matter, seemed rather to want her to know everything ; he had never cautioned her against any type of book. But once he had chaffed Lola with reading French novels, saying, "Wish I could read them, but haven't the time ;" to which Lola had replied, "They put us on our guard, you know." She believed that her little bit of malice

had been successful, for not once of late had Mark mentioned Edith's name ; but then she had not either heard him speak of the book, for there had been no opportunity for the quiet, free, cosy bit of chat she meant to have with him about it some day. As a fact, Mark had not looked into it, until the Rev. Mr. Gridthorp's hypocrisy and cant, had sent him to it as a relief from lying selfishness, done in religion's name.

When the reign of character which Madge Tillotson longed for asserts its sway over the world, such a man as Mr. Gridthorp will surely take one of the lowest positions in the social scale. Such as he, and loud-mouth, place-hunting patriots, who make religion and patriotism terms of scorn, and useful words to sneer with, will rank far beneath the poor peasant who sits in the village inn, and honestly believes himself to be a politician working for the good of his parish, but "in our barbarous society the influence of character is in its infancy. As a political power, as the rightful lord who is to tumble all rulers from their chairs, its presence is hardly yet suspected." Since these words were written, perchance the reign of character has grown from infancy to toddling childhood ; but when

it is full grown, and the combination of power and goodness rules the world, then indeed will be the millennium ; for nought but right will move men to action.

CHAPTER VIII.

TWO YEARS AFTER.

SOME two years passed away, ere Mark and his sister were enabled to visit the quaint, lovely spot in Cornwall that Edith had described to them on the amateur night in the old Greyborough theatre. The summer had been so unpromising and continuously wet, that they doubted the advisability of Madge's journey to a village where probably there were but few indoor resources, the more so as she was already too fond of an indoor life over books, and it was for the outdoor rambles and sea-coast scrambles that they especially wished to visit this part ; and in the following year they had been induced by some friends to spend a month at a frequented watering-place, but where Madge vowed they met all Greyborough, and heard nothing fresh, and were at every turn being reminded of their own daily life.

As the third summer came round, it seemed to promise fair, even hot weather ; and Mark one morning, ere starting off to business, had looked into

his sister's room, and suddenly blurted out the question: "Have you heard from the fair maid of the mill lately, Madge?" He knew Madge had had one or two letters from the abbey, bits of which she had read out to him, to show him what a sensible girl her friend was; especially one descriptive little bit of Edith's home life, her old people, and how full her hours were of work and music, with a vigorous game of tennis in the summer to round off her day.

Madge looked up at him as he spoke, and said, "No. Why this sudden thought?"

"Because this is just the year to have a week or two in that village she told us about. Write and get her to give you particulars how to get there and about rooms. I suppose they will not be going again this year."

"I do not think they have been, or I feel sure I should have heard about it," answered Madge. "But would you be able to go down?"

"Yes," said Mark; "things are quiet now, and in a week or two I can be away for two or three weeks; and it will do you good, Madge. Rough Atlantic winds, full in from the salt rollers, with the soft south-westerly touch, will blow away all the paleness. No

books, mind ; outdoor life, and the languor only from the salt air."

Madge looked up ; Mark's words seemed to bring a fresh breeze into the room, and he put his hand upon her head, saying, " Write to-day, mind. I must be off now."

His sister's eyes followed him across the lawn and out of the gate, and as she turned again to her desk she wondered how it was he seemed still heart whole ; why had no pleasant girl ever attracted him ? " Ah, well," she sighed ; " then I should lose him, and he is a good brother. I wish, though, he would take me to Bohemia. I'm sure I am strong enough now to travel. I will stay out all day, if we go to Cornwall, and then see if he won't take me next spring when he goes."

So Madge wrote to Edith, and in a day or two received a reply, which she called her brother in to hear. " How strange this is ! " she said, as she took up the letter from her desk. " Just as you asked me the other morning about writing to Miss Treverton upon going into Cornwall, she and her mother were talking the question over as to when they should go. Hear what she says :—

“ ‘ It was only the morning before, after breakfast, I had said to my mother we ought to take the chance of a good summer, and go down to Perran ; and she was half in doubt if the weather would be good, but my father convinced her by saying that it gave every promise of a fine season, and as we had not been down to our old home for some time it would do us both good, and he would come down just for a day or two before harvest began ; and I had written a letter, but had not posted it, when on the following morning yours came. We shall be staying with friends, but I know a comfortable cottage where, if they are not occupied, you can have rooms—pleasant, and very clean, looking out on to the sea and sands ; and I am sure the glorious air and the big rollers will bring health and life to you. I do so hope you will be there. I often think of our walk to Barton Mills, and your kindness at the theatre. Mr. Waddington often speaks of you and your brother in his letters.’ ”

“ Oh, does he ? ” interrupted Mark. “ I should have thought all his big schemes would give him no time for love-letter writing. I’ll tell Shedden. I think he was beginning to think he would get the reversion of his maid of the mill, as Luke intends being Lord

Mayor, or Chancellor of the Exchequer, from the big things he has on. Poor David ! I can never get him out here now. Happy thought ! I'll tell him we are going down to—where was it ? ” and as he took the letter his sister got up, and walked to the window, turning from him. “ Oh, Perran—where's that, I wonder ? he'll find out, if I tell him we are going and his maid of the mill will be there ; and he can go and sketch her as a sea nymph, under the rocks she says are so beautiful. Well, ta, ta, Sis ; we must wait now until we hear ; ” and without noticing the hot flush that had overspread his sister's usually pale cheeks, he was gone.

In a few days the letter came with the news that the cottage rooms were free. Madge had some doubts, when she learnt from this letter that the owner of the cottage was a miner, and it would be his wife who would look after them and cook for them ; but they could dine each evening at the inn if they liked, which Edith thought might be a pleasant change.

“ Won't a miner's cottage be awfully black and smutty ? ” asked Madge of her brother.

“ But Miss Treverton said in her first note the

rooms were very clean, and I don't think she would say this unless she knew the people ; but the dining at the inn sounds funny. However, it will be a joke ; and we shall really see something of poor people in their own homes."

"We can easily get out of it," said Mark, "by paying a week or two's rent, and the price is awfully low." So after Mark had satisfied his parents that they were close to New Quay, and civilisation, and doctors, and telegraphs, the rooms were taken. He met Shedden a week afterwards and told him of their plans. "So come down," he said ; "stay at New Quay for a bit, lots of artists there, and I'll get you a bed at the inn at this Perran ; they say there are two, though I expect you will find it slow."

"If the place is as lovely as you describe," said Shedden——

"Not I," answered Mark ; "the mill maiden. Of course you won't find it slow with her to paint ; but my sister will monopolise her, I expect, as it's doubtful if there will be any one else to talk to."

"Perhaps Miss Tillotson will not care to see Grey-borough faces."

"Glad enough, I expect, after the first day or two."

* * * * *

It was late evening when Mark and his sister drove over from New Quay to the little village of Perran Porth, on a sultry, cloudy night in July. The whole sky was of dull leaden hue, save here and there some clouds of a whitish grey floated slowly onward beneath the upper masses of dull vapour. As they entered the village, around them they saw the desert-like sandhills, and ahead of them great grey and brown barren waste heaps of old mines, crowned with ugly square half-ruined engine-houses ; the little low cottages, and primitive village shop that served as general store and post office, being the only signs of habitations in the dim heavy light. Mark turned to his sister, saying, "Miss Treverton must have more imagination than I gave her credit for, Sis, or this place hides its beauty very cleverly."

Madge was looking round in half dismay at the scene ; it looked like a deserted, abandoned mining village, and in this place they were supposed to exist for weeks ; and then she thought of Edith's letter, and said : "There must be some beauty somewhere ; we must have come in at the worse end."

"It's both ends as far as I can see ; for there's the

open country yonder," said Mark ; "and I suppose here's our house," he added, as the driver pulled up at a cottage garden gate.

"This is Mrs. Treherne's, sir," he said.

"It strikes me we are in for it ; it looks a poor, wretched, little crib. 'Tis to be hoped you will have a comfortable room, at least ; we need only stay a day or two," he added, as he helped his sister out of the carriage and told the man to bring in the luggage. The door opened as he reached it, and a bright, homely, cheery, dark-eyed woman, holding a lamp in her hand, greeted them.

"I thought it was you, sir, when I heard the wheels stop. Come in, miss ;" and she threw open a door which almost touched the outer door, and in a clean, cosy little room, with tea laid on a snowy white cloth, and white napkins beside each plate, as Madge's eye quickly noticed, stood Edith Treverton.

She stepped forward and greeted Madge. "We have been expecting you for the last half-hour. Mrs. Treherne here was getting quite anxious. Now get tea ready at once," she added, turning to the housewife ; continuing to Madge, "come upstairs and see your room."

The man with the luggage had prevented Mark from going into the inner room ; he had only caught a glimpse of the cleanliness of its appearance, and Edith standing by the laid table ; but he had got rid of the man, and the portmanteaus were housed, ere his sister descended, and he had looked round the room. There were a couple of easy chairs, and four very uneasy ones ; a piano, *mirabile dictu*, and a flute in a case lying upon it, and a small table at the side, with two piles of books, completed the furniture. Over the cupboards, in two recesses on each side of the fireplace, was displayed the family crockery-ware ; tea-pot and jugs, and vividly coloured plates and cups. " Well, it's a relief from outside ; but where's the scenery ? " and he lifted up the blind to look out into the night, but all was now black darkness. He then went to the side table and took up some of the books. There was an old description of Cornwall, one or two out-of-date religious books, a " Westward Ho " and " Two Years Ago " of Kingsley. " You will do to read once more," said Mark, as he discovered these two books ; adding, " more than can be said of modern books. Once read, once surfeited, applies to most of 'em ; they produce actual nausea

on second acquaintance. Ah! what's this?" he added, as he took up a paper-covered torn book. "Democracy, eh? and an American book. May be interesting; think I've heard of it. Suit the Professor, I expect." But his sister's voice coming down the stairs, that seemed to be close to the wall where he was standing, stopped his book researches, and she soon stepped into the room, Edith following her.

"Ah, Miss Treverton," he said, moving just two steps across the little room. "This is kind indeed of you to welcome us."

"And to such pleasant little rooms—as clean as—well, as this tablecloth, and what could be whiter?" said Madge; "and we look out on the sea, Miss Treverton tells us."

"But it is low tide now; if you listen, you can hear it coming in."

There was a dead silence for a moment; and when their ears were emptied of all sound, they heard the low rising and falling, mellowed, but ominous roar of mighty waters.

"In the night," added Edith, "you will hear it plainer; but they are low tides now, and so it does not come very near. In a week's time the moon will be

at the full, and then we shall have a grand sea. But sit down, Miss Tillotson."

"It seems so strange," said Madge; "it was so dark and drear as we drove up, and that distant low roar makes one want to go out and search for it."

"Here's the tea," said Mark, as Mrs. Treherne entered with tea and toast and eggs.

Mark placed the chairs, and the trio sat down. There seemed, he thought now, a cosy sense of comfort in the room—something strangely homely and satisfying; and as they sat and chatted on, he came to the conclusion it was the salt air and long drive that made the eggs and toast seem so remarkably good, so that he was enjoying this homely meal far more than a choice dinner.

"This is one pleasant surprise you have given us, and I suppose the scenery will be another. But how are we to find it? we saw nothing as we came in."

Edith looked up from her plate at his questioning glance, but her eyes were veiled again at once as she cast them down, replying, "Perran hides its beauties to casual passers-by, but you will soon find them in the morning."

"I should like to find them to-night; I like a stroll by the sea at night."

"No, don't do that," said Edith, quickly looking up, now full in his face. "You must not go on the sands until you know them. People don't know our western sea and its terrible power; you must not go first on the sands in the dark."

The earnestness in her voice and manner struck both Mark and Madge. "But," said the former, "one can always get away from a wave."

"Not our waves," said Edith, almost triumphantly. "They sweep in hundreds of yards sometimes. No; don't go exploring to-night. Do not let him, Miss Tillotson."

The anxious, serious tone of the low, musical voice seemed to plead to Mark, though addressed to his sister, and he said, "I certainly should not venture far; but the entry was so disappointing, I want to see something to make up for it."

"And is not this something?" asked Madge, waving her hand over the tea-table.

"Ah, we have to thank Miss Treverton for this," he answered.

"No, not a thing. Mrs. Treherne did all herself;

she knows what little comforts are, and is kindness itself ;” and as if to emphasize her words, the good woman appeared at the door with a dish of whortleberries and Cornish cream, to act as second course to the eggs, that Mark declared were the best he had ever eaten.

They did not sit long over their tea, for Madge had to arrange her room ; and when this was done, Edith came down with a blue Scotch woollen bonnet upon her head, and a shawl wrapped around her, to go to her own home.

Mark was standing at the door, hatless, as she came out. “ You must not go alone,” he said.

“ Oh yes, you would not find your way back ; it is only a few yards.”

“ But I can’t allow—— ” he began, but Edith was gone while he spoke. He dashed into the room, picked up his hat, and followed her. The now quite dark night dazed him for a second, but he soon saw a dark figure on the white road, and rushing up to it found he was not mistaken. “ That was too bad, Miss Treverton,” he said.

“ But I did not want you to come out and leave your sister. See, there is where we are staying ;” and

she pointed to a light ahead on the hillslope, some slight way up. "Now," she added, "you must notice how we go, to find your way back."

They had just come to a bend in the road, where a little bridge arched a tiny rivulet that they could just hear rippling along beneath. On their right rose a house, dark in the night, and then came a wide open space from whence far away came that thud and smothered roar of the incoming waves.

"There, you must cross this little bridge you see, with that house on your left, and your cottage is *en face*."

The two French words seemed to strike curiously, coming from Miss Treverton; but Mark only asked: "And where are you staying?"

"Only just up this slope, and there is the gate. We look out over the whole stretch of coast. Oh, it is so lovely!" added Edith with subdued enthusiasm.

"H'm!" ejaculated Mark; "its beauty is pretty much hidden to-night."

"And there, where those lights are, straight up the road, is the inn, where you can dine when you like. Can't you see the big old fir in front of it?"

"I can see something dark against the light, but it might be anything."

"It is not a grand hotel, but it is very comfortable."

"After the surprise of our rooms, I am prepared for anything," said Mark; "but you played a part, I'm sure, in making our reception so nice, Miss Treverton."

"No, I assure you, I left all to Mrs. Treherne. She is so kindly hearted."

"The little niceties prove that."

"Here we are," interrupted Edith. "You are sure you can find your way back?"

"Oh yes; but the weird mystery of these sands and the sound of that sea almost tempts me to do a stroll."

"No, no," exclaimed Edith; "you must not go on the sands to-night. You don't know our coast. You will not; it is really dangerous."

"Then I will not," answered Mark, surprised at the outspoken earnestness of the tone from this usually diffident girl. He held out his hand and said, "Good-night. My sister will see you in the morning;" and as she answered, "Yes, I will run across,"

she turned, and he saw the door open and her figure disappear in the light within.

Mark's eyes were becoming accustomed to the dim light that seemed to pervade earth and sky, though no star or moon was visible ; and as he came back to the low little bridge, he saw a path led away to the left, and skirted the garden of their temporary home, leading along by the edge of the sand. The attraction of the unseen drew him on, and he passed a cottage or two until the path merged into the sea sand. A high hill loomed darkly up above him, and away to where the increasing roar told him the mighty Atlantic mountain rollers were sweeping in, he thought he could see white streaks that told of foam-capped breakers.

"Utter silence save nature's mighty music," he murmured. "Surely it will do one good to be here ; and Madge will have a true friend, it strikes me, to fall back upon. Ah, this air is full of life ;" and he drew a deep breath of the soft, salt air as he leaned against a heap of broken timbers that was piled up at the end of the path. As he stood still, the onward rush of waters seemed to increase its roar and fill the air around him. The mighty power thus speaking,

seemed to fill his soul with solemn awe. "Surely solitude is of mighty influence," he thought; "I cannot wonder at Lawrence Oliphant feeling that only in calm and solitude can high thought be wrought out. One cannot be truly alone in the crowd; the sight of all the pettiness and baseness of crowds of all ranks seems to pull one down and lower humanity. Moments of solitude, such even as this, tinge and fashion the whole life of a man. I should have brought some good books down here, and instead of that I must needs stuff that 'Clytie' into my bag. I must read that on some wet day, when out of mood with nature, and can bear the vileness of human nature. Why does she so want me to read that book? I suppose it's clever and wickedly witty. Well, I don't mind wit, if it is wit; but it strikes me life is too short to waste the few quiet hours one has in reading valueless books. It's life, she says; well, I'll see;" and he turned away from the solitude: the thought of this book and its owner had taken the sound of the sea roar from his ears, and he walked quickly back to find his sister had gone up to her room.

CHAPTER IX.

WHERE ATLANTIC BILLOWS WORK.

THE next morning Mark awoke to the sound of a steady, persistent hiss of thrashing rain. When he looked out from his window it was but to see the near hillside, across the level bit along which the roadway ran and where stood the two inns, all enshrouded with beating, veiling rain. "Well," he said, as he stood, after dressing, leaning against the window, his head nearly touching the ceiling of his little white room, "Perran is doing its best to disgust us with it. What will Madge say to this? Her friend even will not be able to run across in such a torrent, and no chance of a break, from the look of that solid, leaden sky. Well, what can't be cured must be enjoyed. I shall just have one of those easy chairs up here after breakfast, and go for Lola's book. Dive into human nature, as nature itself is so cruel to me." And he descended the stairs to find their landlady

had laid their breakfast, and was standing by the window looking at the weather.

“Good-morning, sir,” she said. “I am sorry for this ; but it will break when the tide comes in.”

“May you be a true prophet, Mrs. Treherne, for your place did not prepossess us last night, with its mine heaps and stacks, and this is—well, unpleasant.”

“My husband said it would break midday, when he went to work.”

“And what time does he go to work ?” said Mark, carelessly.

“About three now, sir.”

“Three !” exclaimed Mark. “Three in the morning !”

“Yes, sir.”

“And how far has he to go ?”

“Over to St. Agnes.”

“And how far is that ?”

“About a five mile.”

“And he had to walk that in this rain, at three in the morning !”

“Well, sir, rain don’t stop the mining.”

“Of course not,” said Mark thoughtfully. “Then what time is he home again ?”

"Well, early in the afternoon. You see, he has the garden to look after, and he's fond of a bit of music. That's his flute."

"Ah, I wondered who played the flute here," said Mark, going to the piano and taking it up. "We must ask him to give us a tune, and my sister will accompany him. Here she is! Good-morning, Sis. Here's a glorious downpour! How would you like to walk five miles at three in the morning through this? That's the time Mrs. Treherne tells me her husband starts."

The good woman had disappeared, and now came in with some crisply cooked bacon and toast, saying, "I heard you moving, miss, so I knew you would soon be down; but I'm so sorry for this weather, but we'll have a fine afternoon."

"Oh, I can find plenty to do; it's Mark here will be worried with laziness."

"No, I shall leave you to yourself, Madge; only I must get one of these chairs up in my room."

"I was afraid you would want me to play or something to pass the time away, and I'm just in the middle of a most interesting struggle."

"What! the little book, again, Sis? I thought you had given that up lately."

"Oh, it's always fresh!" answered his sister. "If I could but master it in English!"

"Why, your occupation would be gone!" replied her brother; adding in his own mind, "It will be a case of two books of the most opposite thought."

They lingered over their meal, with the air of persons to whom time did not press its injunction that it could never be re-lived. But at last Mark rose, and taking up a folding lounge chair, doubled it up, and went with it upstairs. He had to pass through the living room of his landlady to reach the stairs, and hearing him, she came hastily forward to carry the chair up for him; but Mark gently refused her offer with, "We town folk are not so weakly as that, Mrs. Treherne."

"How kindly that woman seems, and she looks bright and happy too; and yet what a life her husband must lead. Musical, too. Poor fellow! She's young. I wonder what we are to pay for all this kindness; it seems so spontaneous." So ran his thoughts as he arranged his chair by the window, and took out the book he had had so long without reading it.

He ran over the crumpled leaves of this book, which

he had first seen in the bedroom at Dresden, luckily but lightly; for lying in the pages near the end was something carefully arranged by the Signorina, which would have disturbed his peace of mind, and further undermined his faith in human nature during his stay at Perran, had he happened to light upon it. But Lola's care hid her work from his eyes for the present, and he settled down to steady reading of "Clytie," with the thrash, and sweep, and hiss of the torrential rain beating the window-panes near him.

The hours moved on, and midday found Mark still reading. At last he rose up, and, shutting the book, said, "No more of that. Surely no master of English fiction would ever devote time to describing the choosing of pots, and kettles, and sugar-basins for a young student and a woman—for a household that might hold together for a couple of months. Ugh!" he muttered, as he held the book from him, "nought but animalism and lies; deception of parents, and utter selfishness. The man was actually thankful his mother was too ill to find out his crimes. What pleasure can writers have in the vilest society—drunken cabmen, and old *roués*, and vile women? To what does it all tend?—this bestiality, and brutality, and

denial of all purity. Why, words of purity seemed blasphemed when they occur in such a book as this ;” and Mark held out the book at arm’s-length.

“There’s no fire here, or I should be tempted to burn it, and tell her I’d lost it. Good heavens ! what a burning, scathing taunt at the man’s own nation—he a Frenchman’s one pure character, is a young English girl, and her presence even in such a book terrifies one.”

He threw it away from him as he spoke, and looked at his hands. He felt like a man who had seen a heap of foul filth by the roadside, and had stooped and handled it—smelt, and even tasted it. “No more of this for me,” he said. “What can induce a girl who loves good music as she does to read such awful stuff, and to ask me to read it ? ‘Life,’ she calls it. Bestiality and madness, I should call it. And yet there is nothing low about her face. Perhaps, after all, the thing ends well. She cannot like the book for the part I’ve read ; but I can’t stand any more of it now ;” and he took it up from where he had thrown it, and carefully placed it at the bottom of his portmanteau.

“I must have a good wash ; one feels dirty after

such a book," he said, as he rose from carefully locking up the book that had occupied his morning. "Heaven preserve England from such writers as that! I'd better say readers of that," he added, resuming his old cynical manner. "Authors will write to anything the readers will go for. Ah! there's Madge at the piano! What has she been about all the morning? Feel half ashamed to go down after such society; faugh!" and he went to the window and looked out.

The rain was still pouring down, but he could see now to seaward—a stretch of yellow, and a faint gleam of greyish white where lay the sea.

"It's going to break as Mrs. Treherne said. A fresh breezy blow will clear this foulness away a bit. The clear water has done something to it."

The miner was right in his judgment of the weather; and ere Mark and his sister had finished their lunch, the line of deep, dark clouds had slowly been drawn up towards the midday sun, and at last he burst forth from their inky veil in midsummer glory.

"Madge, we must get out at once. This sun will dry everything in half an hour. Get ready as soon as possible;" and Mark rose from the table, throwing

his dinner-napkin upon it carelessly, and going to the window.

“ Ah, come ! one can see a bit more now, and I can hear the breakers rolling in. Come, Madge, lose no time ; let’s explore these beauties of Perran.”

They soon started forth, to find the tide still far out on the sands, and receding ; but the black, thin lines of seaweed told them how high in certain tides the sea rolled in. They made away to the northward, first of all, Madge stopping continually to drink in the strong, salt air that came in now on a falling, lulling wind. The brown sand was beaten level and hard by the rain ; but they soon saw they could not go far yet to the northward, and on looking back as they had got out to a headland round which as yet they could not pass, Mark saw that the cliffs were wondrously broken up to the south side of the bay, and suggested a return to explore that side. As they returned near their cottage, they saw Edith passing up the road, as though coming from it. Mark shouted, but she did not hear, so he was compelled to take to his heels and run after her. He soon caught her, and brought her back to his sister, who had hastened up.

"You have been out, and I wanted to be the first to show you Perran."

"But we have seen nothing but this glorious stretch of sand, and the breakers."

"I am so glad," exclaimed Edith, "you have not been that way yet. How lucky you should have gone this way first! We cannot get out to some of the caves yet, but we can get amongst the rocks, and the tide is going out." Then, suddenly stopping, she said, "But, no, we will go up over the hill first, and look down on the cliffs, and later on we can get down amongst them."

"We are in your hands," said Madge. "To be out in this air is to be happy."

And so the trio went on across the sand, and up a sloping path, above where some great fishing-boats, sturdy, mighty, whaling-like boats, that would live in any sea, were lying tethered with great warps to the cliff. They passed on over the head, amid what Mark at first took to be pit dwellings, so like were the round holes to the pit dwellings that are seen in British camps; but Edith explained they were but scratchings for tin pit holes, and not dwellings. Out they passed over the springy turf on to the head, from

whence they looked down and saw the strange and fantastic mighty rocks in a succession of sculptured arches; the white-lashed sea came sweeping in through these arches, that were of wondrously rich and ruddy hues, and poured in mighty masses around, leaping high over the cliffs. Far to the west towered up, half veiled in the sunlight mist, a grand headland, with a little isolated rock by its side.

Neither Mark nor his sister spoke as they stood and looked down upon this scene; but Edith's eyes lit up with satisfaction as she saw how both brother and sister were drinking in with almost amazement the beauty she was showing them, the beauty of her birthplace.

"We will go on a little farther," she said, and led the way up past a modern castellated building pretentious and empty, to where they had the view of two mighty headlands jutting out into the sea, all green and yellow, black and grey, with turf and peeping slate, and stunted heather, and soft green sward. In tone and boldness these heads reminded Mark of the Western Highlands, and the walk was as the north walk at Lynmouth for its precipitousness and want of shelter; but the scene was mightier

and bolder. The sea was sweeping into these outstretching heads in long rollers of dark green hue, and the three friends stood watching them for a time, as though awed and fascinated by the beauty around them.

Edith was well pleased at their silence ; but at last she broke it with,—

“Do you like it?”

“Like it!” exclaimed Mark, simultaneously with his sister exclaiming, “It is sublime!” “Like it? It far surpasses anything I expected.”

“And when you are down amongst the cliffs, the beauty is greater ; and we have plenty of grander bits than this.”

“Madge!” exclaimed Mark, “Shedden will go wild over this. He must come down. I will write and tell him.”

“Do,” answered his sister spontaneously. “He will be delighted at such extraordinary beauty.”

“He wants to sketch you, Miss Treverton, sitting at the foot of one of these rocks. He may know part of the beauty he wants to sketch, but he certainly doesn’t know all.” At which clumsy innuendo of Mark’s the blushes came to Edith’s cheeks, and,

strange to say, to his sister's also. "Said a stupid thing," he thought; "better not chaff her about Shedden. Wonder if Waddington cares for this place at all."

They turned to go back towards the little village to get down amidst the cliffs, that looked so beautiful from this height.

"Madge!" suddenly exclaimed Mark, "this beats all the poring over books, however good they may be."

"My pet little book does not believe in books. I can give you a bit against books—four lines only, but they mean a lot.

"Seek not for wisdom or for learning
In old books with dust bestrewed;
Look round thee, ne'er thy fellows spurning,
And glean the lore with life imbued."

"Bravo! old Mirza," said Mark. "He was no ascetic."

"Not he," replied Madge heartily; "he believed in life, and so do I, if I had strength," she replied sadly.

"Oh, but this stay will give you life," said Edith, stepping nearer to her as in protecting friendship.

“Our Cornish air and Cornish fare will put vigour in you, I know.”

“And if do get strong, Mark, next spring I go to Bohemia. Mind, I will go.”

“We must see if we have a fine spring.” He did not say so to damp his sister’s rising spirits, but he thought, “She must have a companion if she does. I will not venture alone with her so far ; and yet I should like to give her the pleasure,—she has so set her heart upon it.”

CHAPTER X.

AT PERRAN INN.

IT was drawing on towards evening ere the trio returned towards the village, and when they reached the path turning down amidst the cliffs, Edith said,—

“You must just come down on the sands, and have one peep at the caves in this western light ; and then I shall be able to point out to you where you must not go when the tide is coming in.”

They descended between walls of cliffs of ruddy, richest hues, down on to the sands, and Mark and his sister looked in wonderment at the beauty around them.

“We cannot get round to the Cathedral Cave, as they have lately called it,” said Edith, “but we can get to some of the smaller ones ;” and she led them on, crossing a swift-running stream that was hastening out to the still ebbing tide. One sea-worn bay she led them into was as the grand apse of some mighty building. In the centre of this apse stood a rich

brown stone as an altar, fringed and incrustated with dark seaweed and tiny shells. Behind this were deep recesses as chapels, one to the south-east most rich in colour of warm red, and delicate grey and white, interspersed with grey, green, and brown, and the deepest chocolate. Lines of spar running amidst this full scheme of wondrous colour were white. On the opposite side a mighty arch formed a north transept to this sea-worked temple. The flooring was of the softest-hued brown sand, and at the doorway was a clear great pool of water, left by the departing tide.

"Truly your Perran is modest, and hides its beauty—in fact, positively lies about it," said Mark, as he stood in wonder at the full richness of form and colour around him. "Who, driving through, would dream of such loveliness as this?"

"That is the fun," said Edith heartily, "to those who know it, and love it," she added softly.

Mark looked round as she spoke, and he thought he had never before seen her without that modest shrinking within herself, that so veiled her power. Yes, once he had, when her eyes were flashing with anger in the quarry amid fighting men. But now it

was not anger, but enthusiastic love of these cliffs and sands, that had been her home in childhood, and that she loved to show to those who could see their beauty.

"But come out on the sands, and look at the whole line of cliffs," she said, "and then we must go in, for dinner is at half-past six, and it is now nearly six."

"But we have not said anything about it!" exclaimed Madge. "I forgot it, as Mark was so impatient to get out."

"I told them at the inn you would be there, and they will keep places for you."

"Why, Miss Treverton is relieving you of all trouble, Madge," said Mark.

"You can see to-morrow which you like best—to dine at the inn or at your lodging. But look, now you can see the whole line of the cliffs."

They had walked out to seaward as she had been speaking, and could grasp in one view the whole series of cliffs and caves and arches. Nature had truly worked in strangely various forms, and had shaped these mighty cliffs into architecture, that curiously copied the various periods of man's handiwork in apse and aisle and nave.

The most eastern rock was fashioned with a

narrow lancet-like arch as of an Early English aisle, whilst nearer in middle distance was a great mass of rock shaped out into a pointed Gothic arch ; and away to the westward yet another archway was of the square-headed type, as of the Perpendicular ; but nature had worked upon a scale and in richness of colour that outvied in beauty all handiwork of man, and the wideness, and breadth, and power of the scene was made more impressive by the magnificent line of white surf that stretched along the soft expanse of grey brown sand, far onward to where, some four miles off, the outstretched head of an insulated rock closed in the view.

“How very fortunate that you told us of this glorious place, Miss Treverton !” said Madge, as she stood trying to grasp the whole beauty of the scene. “We cannot tire for some time of this. Mark thought we should have to pay off our rooms, and go last night.”

“Oh, but you have lots to see yet !” exclaimed Edith. “We cannot see the caves to-day, and all along that coast,” pointing eastward, “are some lovely spots ; and there is the old church in the sands, and Cligga ; ah, Cligga is grand !”

“And will you be our guide to all these beauties?” said Mark.

“Oh, yes; I shall be glad to show them to you; very few that come here see them. But we must really go up, or they will be waiting, and there are a good many at the hotel now.”

“But you called it an inn just now,” said Mark.

“Oh, lately they have taken to calling it an hotel.”

“I hope they have not turned a good inn into a bad hotel; but come, Madge, this sounds ominous, and suggestive of stiff *table d’hôte*, that after such a ramble would be unpleasant.”

And the trio hurried on up the sands, jumping the streamlets that trickled here and there through the strand, and almost racing now and then over the soft firm sand; or sometimes sinking in, where under-water made the sand yielding.

After a hasty preparation in their own rooms, they went, accompanied by Edith, who had awaited them, up to the inn, in front of which stood the lonely old fir-tree. Here she left them, saying, “We sometimes come in after dinner to spend the evening, but this evening you will want to make the acquaintance of those staying here.”

Mark thought this doubtful, as he said good-bye, and would have preferred her saying they would come in this evening; but ere he could speak almost, she had shaken hands with Madge and was gone.

The gong had rung as they neared the door—an unpleasant sound to Mark, for he always associated gongs with modern hotels, bad imitations of French dinners, and hurry, worry, and crowds; but on entering the dining-room they found only about a dozen persons. These, the guests, carved, and the hostess helped to wait; and as dinner proceeded it turned out to be good English fare, well cooked, ending with fruit and Cornish cream, which Mark's neighbour informed him was different to the Devonshire cream, as it was not clotted.

After dinner the party passed into a room that served as music, and reading, and general *causerie salon*. Mark had discovered that the little company was by no means without interest. Three sisters had especially attracted his attention by their strangely jet-black hair, and dark, Indian type of face; and yet he was told they were pure Cornish people, and of Cornish descent for generations back, though their name was Spanish. A contrast to them

was a young girl, who with her mother sat nearly opposite Mark and his sister at dinner. She spoke but little, and Mark noticed that a strange, far-away look, an absent-minded or rather an occupied-with-deeper-matters air, seemed to frequently possess her in the midst of the chat around her. But they did not stay long this evening to make nearer acquaintance with their inn companions. One friend Mark had made in this first evening at Perran, a London professional man who had discovered Perran many years before, and who annually came to enjoy its calm and beauty and free salt life, so opposite to the din and struggle and ceaseless mill-round of London, and its ever-pressing, get-in-front-of-the-other existence.

Mark said to his sister, as they went home beneath the cloud masses that swept over the half-full moon, that he expected some pleasure from the society of this genial and enthusiastic companion; for he knew every cave and inch of Perran and its vicinity, and had promised to explore with Mark any spot he would like to visit. "So, Madge, when the book or Miss Treverton want you wholly, I shall be off with Street."

The next few days passed swiftly enough. Edith

proved to Madge how enjoyable was the bathing at this spot where bathing cabins were unknown, but where the caves formed tiring rooms more beautiful than hand of man could fashion. The sea in its strength might be harder and colder than the limpid blue waters that laved the Greek islands, but Aphrodite herself never rose from the sea foam in a more glorious abode than in the prism-hued caves where the retiring sea had left deep clear baths, where the most timid bather might luxuriate in the strong Atlantic waters.

The weather was too rough for any to bathe in the open. The mighty waves as they rolled in and broke, even at the third break enveloping the tallest man, forbade with their mighty roar the boldest swimmer to venture into them ; quieter weather must be awaited for this ; but Mark found, beyond a picturesque rock that formed a centre piece to the central expanse of sand, some wide deep pools, always left by the receding tide, that formed swimming baths, where a man could plunge and swim at his ease in full enjoyment and in safety. His newly found friend, Street, told him this was called the Chapel Rock, because it could always be reached at chapel

time. The spring tides that surrounded it were earlier or later than chapel time, and the middle day tides did not wholly surround it.

Mark had never again opened the book that had occupied the hours of his first morning here; and when he thought of those hours, it was with an annoyed feeling that his first morning in such a spot should have been so worse than wasted. But as he roamed over the sands in company with his sister and her friend, and sometimes caught the earnest expressions with which Edith answered Madge's talk about life, and its capabilities and possibilities, he said within himself, "Thank God, I stopped that mind from being even touched with such thought." He had led the chat to the subject of French literature one day, when they were sitting at low tide by the westernmost square arch that was dubbed the Mussel Rock, because there were no mussels on it, some one had facetiously said, and he found that Edith's knowledge of French works seemed to be confined to the older writers, and she did not know apparently of any of those writers who deem the foulness of human nature is the whole of human nature.

One by one he drew from her the names of all the

French books she had ever read, and especially those Lola had lent her, almost inquisitorially ; and only once was his mind shaken, when Edith said, "The Signorina always used to say some of her books we English could not understand, which made me inquisitive as to what those books were ; but when I asked her to let me see if I couldn't understand them, she said, ' And suppose I was found out ? Some one would be cross if I did. Perhaps some day I will, though ; ' but, she hardly kept her word," added Edith, lapsing into silence.

Mark felt from this pretty confident he had prevented this mind at least from the foul taint of such words, and was thankful. One cannot buy up and burn such books, as that the authors would enjoy, for money plus notoriety is their sole aim. And then the vision of Lola came up before him, as she was on the evening she lent him the book. He seemed to feel the warmth of her breath upon his face ; he saw her deep eyes looking up into his, and the delicate rounding of neck and bust rising and sinking beneath his eyes. For the moment, rocks and sand and ocean were not before him, but that darkened room and this warm, palpitating form. " I must talk to her about it,"

he inwardly said. "What can she see in such works?" and he recalled himself to the moment as he heard his sister say, "I did not know you knew so much of French ; we ought to talk it, I think."

"We had better get away from this, or the tide will catch us," said Mark.

CHAPTER XI.

A NINTH WAVE.

THE next morning Mark had a letter from Shedden, saying he expected to be down in a day or two. "The fact is," the letter ran on, "all artistic Greyborough is emigrating to New Quay this year. Yesterday I met the Signorina. I had told her before where you and your sister were ; but she seemed to know all about it, from Waddington, I think. He sees a good deal of her. He and poor Penaluna, contrasts as they are, are her friends. When I told her I was going down to New Quay (I did not think to tell her you had gone on to Perran), she exclaimed, 'How strange ! my father and I are going there this year ; he wants a holiday, and I am, well, *épuisée*.' I expect we shall hit it to come down together ; it will be pleasant to have company in that long railway run. By the way, Waddington has just started a well-appointed dogcart. That young man has gone up with a bound, and he seems to be going ahead, though busi-

ness is fast going backward. He certainly fell on his feet that day he took the bank berth I refused ; it was the step to fortune with him. He never speaks of Miss Treverton, is she as fair as ever ? ”

“ Ah, David,” laughed Mark, “ your letter is like a woman’s, all in the postscript. That last phrase is your whole heart, I expect. Well, if Luke throws her over for bigger game, he’s a fool, and you are in luck. He saw the Signorina yesterday, did he ? Strange she should have come so vividly before me down on that rock yesterday ; was it at the time David was talking with her, I wonder ? There is more in this mind power to annihilate space than we credit. Can a strong mind compel another mind to think when it will of certain subjects ? if so, what a power, what a force in human affairs is here unused ! There is more in this than all the tricks of spiritualists, if one could establish it. Was Lola thinking of that night, and those warm hot kisses ? Well, she will be at New Quay, not here. She and Miss Treverton are strange contrasts, but both two unknown depths. We must drive into New Quay some day. Miss Treverton says she often goes boating there in good weather, and these storms seem settling down now.”

Mark had gone up to the village general shop of Perran, that did the business of a post office, and despatched telegrams, amidst pots and kettles, and sides of bacon, and bales of cloth, and he was reading the letter as he was walking on down to the sands to join his sister and her friend. He saw them in the distance, sitting beneath a ruddy-toned rock, and he waved the letter above his head as he approached. When he came up he cried out, "Good news for us in this solitude ; all the talent of Greyborough is at New Quay, and Shedden is coming down with the Signorina and her father."

"They are not coming here?" said Madge ; and Mark remarked that a flush went to the temples of both as he mentioned Shedden's name.

"Yes, that is, they are going to New Quay, and will drive over here, and I expect Shedden will stay. Ah, Miss Treverton, you will have to submit to be sketched by that young man again ; he knows when he has a bewitching subject."

Edith rose up, as though to walk from the rock, as Mark's raillery increased her unease.

"The Professor will hardly care, with his daughter, to settle for more than a day here, I expect," said

Madge; "she will seem incongruous in such a spot."

"She will feel so, I expect," added Mark, laughing. "What a grand sea is sweeping in!" he continued. "This stormy weather, if it prevents long excursions, gives us magnificent breakers. Come, let us go down to the westward, and watch it; we can get into the caves if it rains."

"I think I shall leave you and Miss Treverton to go alone this morning," said Madge quietly.

"Why, what's the matter?" quickly and anxiously asked her brother.

"Nothing; but I think I will change my mind, if you will let me," she added, turning to Edith.

"Why, I thought you brought lunch out with you!" exclaimed Mark.

"So I did; but you can manage that, if Miss Treverton will assist you."

"Oh, you must let me go on with you; you will be all alone."

"No, really I prefer it this morning."

"An inspiration, Miss Treverton. 'Vex not thou the poet's mind.' Must not quote further. Nothing wrong, really, Sis?"

"No, really ; you can give me your friend's letter, to read about Greyborough news, if there is nothing private in it," said Madge very quietly.

"No, only news that Mr. Waddington is still marching onward to fame and fortune. You must read that bit out to Miss Treverton."

"When you come in ; don't be late," said Madge, as she started off over the sands at a quick rate, with David's letter held in her hands.

"H'm !" said Mark ; "sudden freak this. What it is to have sudden inspirations. But now, Miss Treverton, you must show me all the caves you can, and then we will have our lunch away on the Mussel Rock there, and watch these mighty rollers come in. When Shedden comes, we must hope for more settled weather to do these longer walks you tell us about."

"Ah !" said Edith, "we shall have but little settled weather, if Perran folk are right. 'Saturday's moon comes seven years too soon,' they say ; and this is a Saturday's moon."

"It's an evil moon, is it ? but it may change at the full ; not but what I think this intermittent sunshine and these grand cloud masses are more beautiful than a steady blaze of sunshine."

"Oh, I love the sunshine!" exclaimed Edith.

They wandered on into caves, and clambered up to a curiously scooped-out rock, that Mark had first thought was the Chapel Rock, from its window-like apertures.

"It is a bit of old days in Perran, this," said Edith, as she and Mark stood inside the dark, cavern-like pile, with its windows on each side scooped out from the hard natural rock. "The names of Adventurers' Hole and Vugga Plunder tell what it was used for."

"And these," said Mark, pointing to some deep well-like holes sunk in the rock flooring, "are for the hiding-places of the plunder, I suppose. What a bit of description for an adventure story! The dark recesses of these cavernous retreats. Why don't you try your hand at a story, Miss Treverton? You know all the tales, I expect, about the old days here. Why 'The Adventurers' Hole,' or 'Vugga Plunder,' would be a grand title in itself. Stir in plenty of blood and murder; screw the swords round in their bodies, after you've killed the myrmidons of the Crown; and your book will sell by thousands."

They were walking out of this dark cavern, along

a much-worn path in the centre of a ridge of rock, as Mark said this, Edith in front of him.

As they came into the sunlight, she turned and said : " You do not believe in such books ? "

" Don't I ? " said Mark, " A man can make piles by them, only stir in pages of blood. The British like blood ; they give it to their boys. You can't give 'em too much ; and I'm sure you could find some awful stories down here."

" I never tried to write, and I certainly would not try to frighten people," was the reply.

" Oh, but they like it ; and look at the money in it."

" Money is not life, or joy," said Edith, with so sad and quiet a tone that Mark inwardly thought, " Miss Treverton is not at one with Luke Waddington on this point. I believe David would stand a chance, if he had a little more decision about him."

The morning was soon gone in this rocky scramble, and searching in clear pools for seaweeds, and after a long halt under the strangely fantastic but lovely-hued rock called Sunny Corner, the couple had wandered on, and sat down beneath the hillhead that topped the farthest western square arch, to enjoy the lunch that Madge had left with them, and then sat watch-

ing the mighty rollers draw nearer and nearer, and leap higher and higher in snowy lace-like, veiling foam, over the multi-coloured rocks.

"Miss Tillotson is very much absorbed in her writing," said Edith quietly, as Mark had exclaimed, when a grand wave had given a finer effort than its fellows, how he wished she had remained out with them!

"Yes," he answered; "almost too absorbed, I think, and nothing comes of it."

"But she has the pleasure, and the aim in life; and some day we shall read her work in print."

"Oh, I don't know," said Mark; "writing and publishing are two different things. Madge's pocket-money will hardly run to that."

"But how many do publish; even we see that in our village library."

"Ah!" laughed Mark, "the weakest girls are the bravest at publishing. But Madge's little book has given her hours and days of pure pleasure, and I think has made her full of thought; she was very wild at school, and hates conventionality now. This life suits her."

"She is stronger, I think, already," said Edith.

"She wants a friend that can understand her, to whom she can talk freely and fully," said Mark.

Edith was gazing out seaward as he spoke, and she did not answer for a moment ; but as if replying to an inward thought, and not to any words she had heard fall, she said in a low undertone, "We all want that."

"She is very grateful to you, Miss Treverton, for all your kindness down here ; everything runs so smoothly. It was a lucky chance our meeting you that day in Barton Park ; Madge often refers to it ; and I have not forgotten myself the music we heard together in Langley Minster. You like music."

"Music is my little book, I think," replied Edith.

"And you have given us none down here ; when are you coming up to the inn for an evening ?"

"Music must be very good when we have the thunder of the sea in our ears," said Edith.

The word "thunder" only could describe the thud and roar of the waves as they now swept in ; the tide had crept up, and the rollers were breaking, far beneath, but yet at the foot of the great rock on which they were sitting. They could see them far away to the eastward roll up and break over Gull

Island in towering foam; but both were too lost in the subjects with which their minds were occupied to watch too closely all the wild beauty of the sea. Mark was trying to probe this mind, to trace what influence Lola had had upon it. His words had touched chords in Edith's mind that vibrated to longings which she felt would never be realised. Music was the outlet to these longings; and she thought if Madge, with her wealth and troops of friends, yet wanted a real friend, how much more did she long for this bosom friend, who would aid her and help her to a higher life?

Both were sunk in dreamy thought, the cynic and the village girl, when Mark's eyes turned seaward, and almost upon them, nearly at the foot of the rock, came a mighty mountain of water.

"Good God! it will sweep over us," flashed the thought. He clenched Edith's arm. "Run!" he yelled; but the whole cliff seemed to tremble with the mountain ridge of water that struck it. Mark heard the roar climb up the cliff behind them, and saw the white foam above his head. He crushed Edith down on the rock. "Hold tight!" he yelled, as he clung with one arm round her and the other round a pin-

nacle of hard rock that the sea had worn from the cliff. "God help us!" went from his soul as he heard the rush of water sweeping upon them. He felt the salt foam cut his face, and then a mass of water swept down on them.

For a second the form he clenched dragged away from him; but he clung desperately to rock and form, and felt in an instant the strain lighten. The wave was spent. "Run, now!" he cried out, as he started to his feet. To his amazement Edith also started up and they rushed along the cliff inland, and halted only when safe some hundred yards farther beneath the hill head, where no sea ever broke.

"Thank God!" said Mark. "We're both pretty wet, though. That was a close shave." He saw the blood leave Edith's face as they stood still hand in hand by the rock wall, and for a moment he feared she would collapse; then the blood rushed again to her cheeks, and the tears came welling to her eyes, only to change into a smile as she said, "Guess we'll have to change." So her speech hid her thought even from Mark, and he let go her hand, and they looked at one another, all drenched and dripping, with both their hats gone.

"Good study for a comic picture," laughed Mark ;
"but Madge must not know."

"Nor mother either, if we can help it," said Edith.

"How can you get back?" asked Mark.

"Oh, over the hill here, and in at the back. Nearly every one will be out now."

"And I can easily pop into my room ; these tennis flannels will soon dry ;" and the pair hastened up the cliff, keeping away from where the few frequenters of the sands might be ; and as they neared the village, Mark held out his hand as Edith left him, saying, "May we be never nearer mischief" ; and then cut across the upper part of the sands to his room. He reached it without being seen ; and as he stripped off the drenched flannels, he saw a black wall of cloud covering the whole western heaven, foretelling torrents of rain. "These are the sort of waves that have to answer for many a ship that is reported missing, I expect ; and there comes the storm that was driving it onward. Well, it's an adventure, but far too close a shave to be agreeable. How well that girl stood it ! Thought she was gone, for an instant." He hung his clothes on a chair by the window to dry, and putting on the suit he generally wore at the inn at dinner, he

descended to find his sister had been working away all the morning reading and then translating, as the mood varied with her. He said nothing of the escape, trusting that she would not learn it until at least some days had worn off the terror and shock of the immediate danger.

But the following morning, when he went down to the village shop to see if there were any letters, he heard a piece of news that brought home sharply to him how great was the danger they had been in, if anything could have more convinced him of this than the experience.

"Sad news this, sir, up the coast," said the shopman, who retailed news as well as letters, and bacon, and boots, and drugs. "Just heard of it through the wire. Two young ladies swept away at Westward Ho."

"How was that?" asked Mark. "Too venturesome, I expect."

"No, sir, no; seems not. People don't know our western sea, sir, and ought to be forewarned. No, sir; seems they was walkin' along watchin' the sea, and a bigger wave than usual rolled in and swept them off. Bodies not been found. Terrible thing, sir, for their friends."

"Very terrible," said Mark thoughtfully ; and then looking up : " We shall see more about it in the paper."

"To-morrow, sir, to-morrow. I've just been told of it by a friend up the line," said the man, proud to give some news before it was "in " the papers.

"Terrible thing, indeed, for their friends," thought Mark as he went out, forgetting to ask if there were any letters. "It would have killed Madge."

CHAPTER XII.

A CHARACTER STUDY.

A KINDLY American reviewer in the *Saturday Review* of New York, as its own readers describe it, once expressed a wish that the "minds, hearts, and souls of the characters" in a certain book "might be put into a night express train, so as to carry on the story." Lovers of this express-train literature may well turn over the leaves of this chapter, and leave it to those who do not believe the enjoyment and charm of life consist in express trains, and excitement, horror, and despair, and enthralling incident and bloodthirsty crime. Our lives are truly a *peau de chagrin*; and end but in chagrin if we will away that magic morsel of skin symbolical of our time, in feverish wishes for ever-recurring excitement. The motto that Balzac gives to that wondrous study of human nature is ignored by satiated English readers who long for excitement, blood, and more blood, until the caterer to this demand is fain to kill off

whole batches of his characters to satisfy the craving he has incited.

Express trains never disturb the lover of nature in storm and calm, in the glorious corner of England where now are clustering for an invigorating holiday many of the characters we have learned to know; and this chapter literally has nought to do with the action of the story except in so far as nature by her beauty and varied moods influences character. It may comfortably be skipped by those who want to get on with the story; it is but perhaps a little peep into the character of some of our personages, and the sketch of a couple of days' pleasure that will live in the mind of David Shedden when sensational theatrical scenes of blood-curdling plots have effectually had a *Schwamm d'rüber*.

He did not, after all, go down to New Quay in the company of Lola and her father, for happening to meet a musical friend one day soon after his chat with Lola, he told him where he was going, and the musical friend, who was an accomplished and excellent baritone singer, immediately wanted to join him.

"But look here," he said, "don't go straight to New Quay. Take a turn round the coast before you

get there, and see some of the bits that Brett and Shaw paint."

"But I want to get to New Quay quickly," urged David.

"Oh, we can do a lot in a day. At least, let us go to Wadebridge and get round the coast from there. I should say we can do that in a day."

And so it ended in these two friends stopping at Wadebridge, on the Saturday evening following the day upon which Mark and Miss Treverton had had so remarkable an escape. They had not gone direct to Wadebridge, as Shedden's friend had suggested; he had gradually persuaded him to lengthen out his journey down, and so they had had a glorious drive from Okehampton, over Cornish hill and Cornish moor, behind four easy-running, willing animals, and beside a crusty on the outside, but genial within, old coachman; who was a snarling cynic to the world, but tender as a maid to his horses, and in his greetings to the village children who stood watching for his arrival at cross-road corners.

David's genial friend secured the box seat, and soon drew the old man out. Instead of being lord of the coach, horses, passengers, and guard, he was growlingly submissive.

"There," he said, at the first halt, when some newcomers wanted seats; "there, they don't take no notice o' I. I be only rubbige. I said, 'Give the tickets;' but I bain't no 'count; they didn't take no notice;" and he laid his whip lovingly over the near horse, and pulled it softly along her glossy chestnut coat, until the animal pricked its ears, and would have turned round to take notice of her friend, but a vigorous tug at the reins, and a gathering up, warned all four they must be off; and away they went at a hard gallop along a bit of smooth running.

"Get tips!" said the old man, as David suggested passengers ought to be in a good mood over such a country, and behind such animals. "I!" exclaimed the coachman. "I bain't nothing. It's the guard has everything. He do get all the tips, if there is any. Anyway, I don't never see 'em. I be only rubbige, and got to look a'ter rubbige;" and he let his long whip launch out like an experienced angler, and gently flicked the off leader's ear.

"Well," said Shedden, "those horses don't look like rubbish."

The old man smiled, pleased with the negative compliment to his fresh team—four powerful animals that had to do a heavy piece of the road.

"And what part might you come from, sir?" he asked, as they were pulling up a steep peaked-capped road; and as the answer came, "Greyborough," he exclaimed: "Well now, sure-ly, I've a niece o' mine there to service. She was 'long with a clergyman for a bit, as used to be in these parts; but the money was little, and the work big, and no peace."

"No peace in a clergyman's house, eh?" said David, pricking up his ears. "There ought to be."

"*Ought's* one thing, and *is* is another. There was no peace, so Jenifer said, in Mr. Gridthorp's house. He had a church down in these parts once, and that's how 'twas she came to go there. The money wasn't much, but her mother thought 'twould be a start, and so it wur—a warm 'un."

"So it was near here that Mr. Gridthorp lived, eh, before he came up to Greyborough? He's a busy man there," said David.

"Oh, so a wur here, I've heard. All over the place, and letters always on the papers. But where be you going to stay to-night, gentlemen, in Wade-bridge?"

"Well, we don't know. Where do you say?"

"Well, now, you get down at the first inn we pulls

up at, just across the bridge, and the landlord there can tell 'ee all about Mr. Gridthorp. You'll be comfortable there, and I've often heard he talk about his doin's."

"H'm!" thought David, "this is amusing. I must tell Mr. Gridthorp I've met some old parishioners of his. Waddington will be amused at this."

And so they spun along over bits of moorland, all glorious with gorse and heather, and David thought ere long one would shoot over these hills in a railway carriage, without the invigorating wind blowing freely around one, with cribbed view, instead of expanse of a space all filled with glory and beauty.

"What will you do when the rail cuts you out?" he said to the old coachman.

"There, go and cut up carrion for the dogs, I suppose," was the gruff reply; and at the same moment he waved his arms jollily to a group of children, adding, "They like to see old friends."

A true Cornishman, he loved his country, and pointed out with pride the summits of Brown Willy and Rantor; and once when Shedden accidentally mentioned the Lizard whilst speaking of Devon-

shire to his friend, he turned round in disgust with a grunt, exclaiming,—

“Lizard ain’t in Devon!”

After the mythic site of the Camelot was past, night had fallen, and they drove on beneath lovely wooded avenues, through which the soft moonlight quivered and glittered. Soft hills were around them; a stream glistened in the silvery rays as they rushed onwards swifter than its waters; the guard’s clear notes from the horn woke up the silent night with ringing notes, and the children from clusters of cottages gave a cheer as they galloped past, until at last they went over the long bridge that now saves wading over the Camel, and pulled up at an inn at the entrance to the town.

David’s curiosity had been aroused by the words of the old coachman anent Mr. Gridthorp’s former living in this neighbourhood, so after they had had their supper they induced the landlord to join them over their wine and a smoke, and David led the talk on to the personage about whom he was curious.

“Coachman was telling us you knew a Mr. Gridthorp that used to hold a living down here. We have to sit under him now up our way.”

He purposely threw a slighting tone into his voice, to induce the landlord to speak freely, if he had aught to tell.

“Sit under him!” was the exclamation. “That’s the very words for it. He’d make everybody sit under him.”

“But his great aim is to raise the agricultural labourer at present.”

“To raise himself, more like, and to set everybody by the ears. Look here, sir!” and the man became excited. “I could show you a thing as would take all the faith about Mr. Gridthorp clean out of your heads, if so be you’ve got any in. When he were in these parts, he was always on about education, going about lecturing and writing letters in the paper, praising up some new Government scheme or other. And what were he doing himself?” and the jovial-faced landlord became excited, and awaited a reply.

“Well, I suppose at least he had good schools down here,” said Shedden’s friend.

The landlord laughed a hard, bitter laugh.

“I’ll show you what he was doing”; and he disappeared from the room.

“Why is it,” said David, “that man seems to raise

hate with those he ever lives with? It makes one sicken at the name of religion. Luke Waddington says Gridthorp's a pattern parson, and sneers at all sects, but goes to church because it pays, he says."

"Then he's an apt pupil of the pattern parson," laughed Godwin, rolling out a line of "But I'll be the Vicar of Bray, Sir," in a voice that made the landlord, as he re-entered, say, "Should like you to give us a song, sir."

"Let's see about old Gridthorp first," said David.

"There you are, sir. Now read that, and then believe what you like ; and that was in the parish I lived in, and I can swear to it, every word on it ; and the young woman as nice a young lady as you could wish to meet ; and many's the time me and my missis have asked her up to the farm—I had a farm then—to have a bit o' dinner, for poor enough was her own food, you may bet."

It was an aged brown newspaper he had brought in, and at the part folded down was a letter about the Rev Gridthorp's sincerity in his public advocacy of education. A very long, argumentative letter, but the part which David seized upon ran thus:—

"Situated near Stowmere Church, and about three

or four hundred yards from as nice and quiet a rectory as one could desire to see, is a hovel, to approach which in wet weather you must wade ankle-deep through mud and wet. The interior is a room about seven yards long by five wide ; one part of which (about one half) is open to the roof, the other part has been ceiled so as to form a loft over the ground floor. The floor is paved with fragments of stone, through the crevices of which the damp can be seen to ooze ; and in this place fifty-three children—boys and girls—are assembled for the purpose of being educated. In this place a young and to all appearances a delicately nurtured female is employed to teach the young rustics of Stowmere. The appearance and comfort of the schoolroom will neither exalt nor make them ambitious. In this hovel the teacher has to reside day and night, and here too has she to take her meals, the very food which she eats being contaminated with the foul atmosphere, being kept on shelves simply screened from view by means of a curtain. Here too in the loft, which is or was approached by means of a ladder, is the sleeping place of the governess.”

“ There, sir, what do you think of that,” interrupted

the landlord, "for the school of a man that preaches and writes about education? Honest, ain't he? But go on; see what he paid her."

David read on, and a little further saw: "£25 per annum, which is the sum paid by the Rev. Mr. Gridthorp to the governess of Stowmere School."

"Not about nine bob a week!" exclaimed the landlord. "A pretty man to talk about the poor agricultural labourer!"

"Have another glass of sherry, landlord?" said David, seeing the man's excitement.

"Thank ye;" and he drank off the wine, as though to gulp down his rage.

"Quite interesting to come all down here to hear home news; but what can you do for us to-morrow? We want to get on round the coast."

"Nothing to-morrow, gentlemen," said the landlord, "and New Quay's a long way—five-and-thirty miles by coast, if an inch. No, gentlemen, better stay here to-morrow. I've got two horses coming in late to-night, won't be fit for nothin' to-morrow; but Monday morning they will be right for anything; one of 'em specially will take you round, and I'll do it cheap."

"But we want to get on," exclaimed David.

"What's the hurry?" said his friend. "Let's have a look round here to-morrow."

"Yes, sir; there's two churches everybody goes to see, and at one of 'em as good a preacher——"

"Oh, no preaching after Gridthorp," laughed David.

"Ah, but, sir, stop a bit; he's a man, this one; is as kind and nice a man as you'd wish to meet with. He'd push a donkey-cart up a hill, if he thought the donkey had too much to do."

"And I suppose he does not write to the papers?"

"Oh, but he do," said the man. "Mr. —— is well known, I believe, as a writer;" and he mentioned the name of a well-known litterateur.

"Then we'll stop," said David; "a kindly man like that is worth meeting."

"And I'll do my best for you on Monday, sir," said the landlord, as he left the room.

Godwin had gone to the piano, which was at the street end of the room, and sitting down to it poured forth in robust tones the sweeping notes of a bit of a cantata:—

"He prayeth best who loveth best
All things, both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

CHAPTER XIII.

ON TO NEW QUAY.

"Now," said his friend to Shedden, on the Monday morning, as they were mounted in a comfortable wagonette, with a man to drive them round the coast to New Quay, "are you sorry you fell in with my suggestions?"

"But when shall I get to Perran?" was the reply. "Not to-day."

"To-day! Can you wish for a happier existence than this? A glorious sky overhead. You, an artist, not to notice those clouds. Why, we shall have a day of days; and I'm sure you would not have cared to miss that coach drive, and the news about old Gridthorp, and that little incident last night."

"Ah, that soothes your *amour propre*," said Shedden moodily, and relapsing into silence.

"I've never heard better street singing," said Godwin.

They had been standing at the door of their inn

the night before, when groups of young men and women had passed them, strolling out over the long low bridge, singing in good harmony, and with good voices, low chanting hymns. A sharp shower had suddenly come on, which drove the singers back into the town ; and clustering under an archway they continued their singing, not of the Salvation " army " yelling type, but harmoniously ; and Godwin became interested, and strolled up amongst them. Some church hymns were sung, and then some hymns of the negro type, that make the joy of a camp meeting, such as " Turn to the Lord," with its marching vigorous accent. Suddenly Godwin had joined in, and his full, rich, powerful voice had startled the singers ; and then after a hymn or two he had quietly gone back in the dark to the archway of the inn. But he had broken up their singing, for whilst asking a man if they usually sang like this of a Sunday evening : " Yes, but they've got some maidens amongst 'em to-night ; " as he answered, the young men and maidens came down from the archway under which they had been sheltering, and clustered around Godwin as Shedden had come out of the rooms to see the meaning of this small crowd.

"Are you going to sing here?" he asked of one.

"No, sir, only followed the lieutenant here," answered the young man, pointing to Godwin.

"No, he's the major," said another.

Godwin slipped his arm into Shedden's, and led him away over the bridge, saying, "This sudden military rank is too much; but I couldn't help joining in;" and as they came to the centre of the bridge and turned, he added, "Would all England would sing so well in harmony, and make night lovely with music, instead of hideous with yells!"

This dubbing him as major was the unction about which David had moodily replied, when the next morning they were driving on over the uplands, soon getting lovely peeps ahead of Padstow river, and away to the right the sea beneath the summer blue, cloud-flecked sky, of Mediterranean tones.

Shedden was in a strangely silent humour. Always of a silent, receptive nature, generally under the influence of beauty he was excited; but to-day sky and landscape seemed hidden from him, and his mind was wholly occupied within him. He had fallen in with Mark's suggestion, but what would come of this

visit? Had he better not have stayed away from this little intimate group? He felt eager, as he had said, to be at Perran, and yet he dreaded and feared to be there.

They had driven into Padstow, and made a baiting halt, and on again up past "our church,"—the only name the townspeople could give them,—on to the upland, to where the full view of the Atlantic opens out, before David suddenly awoke to the beauty his eyes-turned-inward mood was cheating him from enjoying.

They had suddenly left the road, and driven in over the fields; and far away the white curling waves were rolling in around an isolated rock.

"Ah," said he, rising up in the carriage, "that's grand!" and he took a deep breath, as though awaking to life from sleep.

"See it at last, eh?" and Godwin too rose and burst out into a snatch of a rolling song, that made the driver look round and give an expressive smile of admiration. On they went, heading straight for Trevoze, the square tower of St. Merryan just overtopping the small cluster of houses on their left; past Harlean Bay, and then on up the hill again, until

they could hear ahead the roar and thunder of the sea on Trevoze Head.

David was now fully awake to the glories around him. On either hand broad sweeps of wondrous beauty held him enrapt, with no thought but of the sea and earth and sky that surrounded him, as they drove on down the hill-side, and in amidst the plain severe black and white buildings of the lighthouse on the head. The two friends eagerly passed in around them, and stood looking out on the marvellous scene that has won the hearts of so many painters.

A sublime view. Beneath them was a tiny black cave, in which the blue and seething waters foamed, headed by a black, slaty rounded point, round which the sea swept in, between a sharp-peaked black rock, all laced with wreaths of foam. Then came a great space of dark blue waters, leading out to a broken line of black rocks, some five or six in all, and all fringed with the purest white of foam. Behind could be seen the great rock that blocked Padstow Bay, and to the north and west the illimitable sea, the horizon line unbroken. The sea leaps up against the sombre black rock, and the wind carries the foam high up, and scatters it like the finest powder of

drifting, snow-white sand. As it rushes in over the lower rock, the clear water is of the softest, faintest light green, graduating far out to the deepest blue.

A dark brown rock is sometimes bare, and then the sea gently creams around it, and softly covers it with the purest veil. Then the veil falls softly away, leaving it for a moment naked ; but the sea hesitates for a few seconds, creams around it again, and again veils it, sometimes lingering long and lovingly over it.

“ Well ? ” said Godwin at length, after he had silently stood and watched his friend’s absorption in the scene.

“ It is well,” said David. “ I have never seen a grander sea. Look at the intense contrast between that black slaty cave, and the purest white of that restless foam.”

“ Are you dissatisfied now with my plan ? ”

“ No ; I’m thankful for it,” came the quiet answer.

“ Then why were you in such a hurry to get to New Quay ? All Greyborough is there this year, and surely we get enough of that chatter.”

“ But I am not going to stay at New Quay. Tilotson has asked me to go out to him at Perran, which is some miles beyond.”

"And who's at Perran?"

"He and his sister, and I believe Waddington's lady friend."

"What! she of the mill?" exclaimed Godwin. "Ah, come along, then. But don't let us have you sighing like a furnace for another man's property. Waddington and she are engaged, I hear."

"Have been for years, from boy and girlhood."

"Well, Tillotson has told me of your *penchant*."

"Tillotson talks nonsense."

"Does he? Then why your anxiety to get to Perran?"

"At least, we must not stay here, or it will be midnight before we reach New Quay, and we shall lose some of the scenery."

And the two friends left the platform on which they had studied sea and view, and drove on again westward, making a halt at a farmhouse, where the goodwife supplied them with some home-made bread and Cornish cream—a refreshment that put them in a mood to enjoy yet another of the grandest stretches of coast that nature has modelled in this rock-bound seaboard.

Shedden had once or twice produced a small

sketch-book to get the outline of some strange bit of rock, or some sheltered tiny bay that lent itself in its perfect form to a small outline ; and whilst he was so engaged, his friend would stroll on over the fields, their carriage slowly following them, for the driver knew his way well, and found field paths and tracks, and opened gates, keeping well to the coast, and letting no choice bit be lost to them. He was obeying his orders well, and Godwin's cheeriness and snatches of song interested him ; and he peered over David's shoulder as he made an outline, and as he shared their bread and cream with them he seemed to be enjoying the day equally with themselves. But at length he was compelled to tell them he must work a little more inland, whilst they could keep away to the coast line, and see one of the most famous of all the Cornish views.

Godwin went ahead, singing as he went along the cliff edge, whilst Shedden followed slowly on behind. For a time away in the hollow of the fields out of sight of the sea, his thoughts turned inward again to the one ever-present, overmastering passion that was changing him into a taciturn, dreaming being. Was it sensible, he asked himself, to be making this

journey, to be in the presence of one to whom he dare not speak, of whom he had no right to think? And yet, as he had stood on Trevoise Head, looking forth upon that sea and sky, and beauty of heaven and earth, how his whole heart yearned to have her by his side, even though he dared say not one word of how much her presence was to him! But to see her face light up, as the glory of the scene grew upon her, and to feel that their minds were in union in the love and reverence for God's glories. And at Perran might this not be? No word should fall from him; but might he not live in her presence, and then in after years dwell upon the memories of those days? Perchance they might even come up the coast together, and look upon the scene that, as he dreamily neared the cliff's edge, seemed to present itself in every detail to his mind. He would be upon his guard; Tillotson should not gain an inkling into his hopes that were not hopes; for should he do so, perhaps their friendship might be endangered, and that must not be. And so resolving, he walked on to the point their man had told them to make for.

He saw Godwin standing upon it, his whole figure

outlined against the deep blue of the sky; he was immobile and silent, nor did he notice his friend's approach; but, as Shedden neared him, he saw a scene which should induce silence and awe and reverence and full-hearted thankfulness in every soul that gazes upon it. Trevoise had been fiercely grand; this scene was more gentle in its glory.

A series of mighty rocks, shut in by two grey brown and yellow headlands; some dozen great masses, in strange, varied shapes, standing out isolated from the cliffs, here worn bare and black by the waves, or yellow with lichen, or tipped with bright green grass; all these giant rocks, strange and fantastic, but all wreathed at their bases with the delicate green waves that roll in like living emeralds, clear as light itself, then break and foam and wreath the rocks with pure, living, heaving, snowy foam, intensely contrasting, yet harmonizing with the greys and browns and ruddy yellow, or the black, slate-like colour of the cliffs. White bleached lines and veins of spar in the smoothly worn recumbent slate rocks gave curious lines of colour, looking like the scattered bones of some great leviathans of the deep. Here and there the cliffs were worn in deep black caverns, that added

yet another colour to the wonderful admixture of the sea of deepest blue, delicate green, and snowy foam ; and the rocks of grey and black, brown and turf-green, or white. Even as David watched the scene, wholly surprised out of himself by this unexpected beauty, soft cumulus clouds swept over the blue sky, and added yet another colour to the sea, forming dark purple patches and flecks upon the blue and green waters ; and then a mightier wave swept in and churned up the soft yellow sand, mingling it with the white foam, and thus giving it a golden hue.

“Can such beauty be surpassed in the whole world ?” at length asked Godwin.

“Different beauty I suppose one may get, but hardly greater beauty,” was Shedden’s reply ; “but we see it on a very special day—a perfect day. What a scene it must be, to stand down amidst those giant rocks !”

“We cannot do that ; but I like the tide sweeping in around them. But our man will think we are lost. Why were you so long coming up ? Thinking again ? What a thoughtful man you are becoming ! Plotting some great work, eh ? Well, if anything

comes of your thoughts, you will remember it was inspired at Bedruthan. We shall not soon forget that scene ; ” and he linked his arm in his friend’s, and the two strolled on over the fields and rejoined their carriage that was awaiting them in a drove some distance from the cliffs.

On they went now at a quicker pace down through the little village of Mawgan Porth, halting, in spite of their driver’s suggestion that evening was setting in, at the quaint, interesting church there ; and then once more getting out and doing a scramble over the hill that gave them their first peep of New Quay ; then down the hill to St. Columb Porth, across the picturesque bar and sandy cove, and so on, as the twilight was gaining upon them, into New Quay.

They had driven between some of the shops, and were nearing their hotel, when another vehicle approached them, that was turning up a side street, when a shout and a wave of the hand from some one on the box seat made David look up, and he saw that it was Tillotson, with two ladies in the carriage behind him.

“ Why, how’s this ? ” cried Mark. “ Where do you

come from? The Raphaellis have been here a day or two, and you said you were coming with them."

David had jumped down and gone round to their carriage, and in the dusk he saw that it was Miss Tillotson and Edith who were with Mark. He shook hands with them, and said,—

"So I was ; but my friend Godwin there has forced me into a glorious bit of coach and coast travel. Ah, Miss Tillotson," he added, "we have seen some scenes to-day that an artist must despair to describe ; poetry may attempt it." Then, turning to Edith, he asked, "Do you know Trevose and Bedruthan, Miss Treverton ?"

"At every tide," was Edith's answer.

"Oh, Miss Treverton is thorough Cornish. We have seen her rowing to-day," exclaimed Mark. "She handles an oar like an old salt. When are you coming out to Perran, David ?"

"To-morrow, I hope," was the answer.

"Do ; and bring Godwin along with you. I will find you rooms, and we will get him to somewhat astonish our musical people at the inn. The Raphaellis are coming over one day. If we get them

to play and your friend to sing, all Perran will be in the bar."

Godwin meanwhile was patiently sitting awaiting his friend's return, so David had to leave with hasty adieux, adding, as he shook hands with Mark's sister,—

"You must let me see what Cornish air has done for your translations, Miss Tillotson. You would have been inspired could you have seen the sights we have to-day."

"We can show you equal grandeur at Perran," said Edith.

"Then I am all eagerness to be there."

Mark leaned down from the box as he shook hands saying quietly,—

"Of course you are. But take care, David ; don't go too near the fire."

The two carriages drove off in opposite directions, and soon Shedden and his friend were comfortably housed in an hotel that gave the former plenty of sketching of the little port and its shipping from its balconied windows ; and as he thought over the day's acute pleasure and full joy in beauty, he half wished he could have lived on without drawing

nearer to Perran ; for what could come of his visit but the same conscious hopelessness that he was being entangled in a mesh that was tightening its strands around him ? and he, in his weak yielding, was making no effort to stand clear from the web that was enveloping him.

CHAPTER XIV.

AN OASIS IN THE SANDS.

THE Signorina Raphaelli found, upon meeting the Tillotsons and her old pupil upon this day of Shedden's drive from Wadebridge, that her precipitous haste had landed them in a contract she fain would have broken. When they arrived at New Quay, they had had some little difficulty in getting rooms that suited their pockets and their wishes, until at length one proprietor agreed to their terms on the condition that the rooms were taken for the whole time they intended staying ; and as Lola was afraid her father would get tired of both place and the expense, she had persuaded him to close with this arrangement. But, to her dismay, she found now that the Tillotsons were not in New Quay at all, but miles away, in a dull bit of a village ; and Mark and his sister had for their only friend, she supposed, that girl she hated. They had done a ramble to-day together

amidst the rocks and over the smooth sands, and Mark had suggested a row, although there was a fair sea sweeping in ; and this girl had coolly even, rowed in a sea that had frightened Lola every time the boat lifted to the waves. When they had driven away in the evening, an engagement had been made for the Raphaellis to come out to Perran early, and a picnic was to be arranged at the lost church in the sands—a spot, Mark said, they had specially reserved for the Professor's visit, for he would be able to see his wish there of a buried church.

“We shall have a capital scramble over the sand hills, and if the tide serves, we can come back along the shore,” said Mark, “and be in time for dinner at the inn, and even a little music before you need positively leave.”

Lola had agreed that would be a pleasant day, but would have preferred not having to leave.

Shedden kept his word the next day, to the disgust of his friend Godwin, who had come to the conclusion that their inn was very pleasant, and a smoke out on the balcony, watching the movement in the little port, a very pleasant manner of whiling away time. But as David had yielded to him in their manner

of coming down, so now he gave way and drove out with him to dull, quiet Perran.

Tillotson had managed to secure a room at the inn that happened to become vacant, as he had spoken about requiring it when he first heard of his friends' coming, so they were saved troubling about where they were to be housed. Lola discovered this some days afterwards, and her chagrin was the greater when her visit to Perran had showed her how like a family party was the life at this little inn. Her whole purpose in this Cornish journey was half defeated by her own rushing at conclusions ; but at least there was to be some opportunity for her scheme to advance in this picnic day on Perran dunes ; and the Tillotsons were to come into New Quay for the regatta which was shortly to take place.

The Saturday's moon kept up its reputation for the first few days after Shedden's arrival. Storms and showers prevented any long rambles, but the sun would burst out between the downpours of rain, lighting up the piled cloud masses that intensified the deep dark blue of the clear sky ; and then, as by signal, the group of friends would be on the sands, sometimes having to scamper to Sunny Corner or

Vugga Plunder for shelter ; and it was at one of these scrambles that Edith happened to seat herself upon a rock, whilst Madge reclined near her, and David whispered to Mark, " Charming study ! Dare I venture to ask them to sit to me just as they are now ? "

" Dare, man ! they would be flattered. What woman ever disliked being asked to have her portrait taken ? Why, I told them you would want to do that ; of course, only for the sake of painting these rocks."

" Will you speak to your sister about it, then ? "

" On condition the work is only for showery days. These scrambles and walks are doing my sister good, and she must not waste too much time in sitting."

Mark said to his sister that evening, " Very cute of David asking to paint you with Miss Treverton ; his diffidence is quite charming."

If the weather had given them constant change and excitement, on the day that the Raphaellis were to come out the morning broke superbly ; and when the trio of men were coming back from their morning's dip, Mark declared the day looked more promising than any they had yet had. " This air and sky

will put the Signorina in the brightest of moods. Why, even the Professor ought to be satisfied with the world on such a day."

But Mark knew nought of the words "money pressure," that makes earth and sky, and sea and cloud, invisible to millions of minds ; that shuts out all beauty, and all hope, except to the few who can set aside past and future, and enjoy in the present the real pleasures of life, that cost nothing.

The baskets had been prepared, and ere the forenoon was well advanced, Mark and his sister heard carriage wheels approaching, as they were slowly strolling up to the inn ; and the Signor and his daughter were seen greeting them with a wave of the hand.

Soon the little party of seven, with a man to guide them and carry their baskets, were *en route* for the sandhills, hidden amid which, only to be found by those well acquainted with the dunes, lay the lost church, near which they were to have their lunch.

Lola and Mark led the way. Then came Shedden with his two sitters on either side of him ; whilst the Professor and Godwin brought up the rear, soon occupied in earnest talk.

It is a strange freak of nature, this planting an enlarged edition of the sand dunes of Holland amidst the wild rock scenery of Cornwall.

Up they climbed, up those high sand slopes, hillock above hillock, up to some that were about two hundred feet in height ; then they came out upon a road running along this upper level ; and then Mark and his vivacious companion struck in again, following their guide (with a shout and a wave of the hand to the others to follow) across a wild space, with sand slopes all around them, and traces of old mining operations, and stream washings for tin. The man's long, slow, solid steps did not seem to frighten the scores of rabbits and flocks of gulls that fed about where the dry sand was varied with marshy, boggy land and reedy grass. They passed an old mine shaft and a group of houses in this desolate waste, and at last their man halted, and pointing ahead said, " There it is."

Mark and the Signorina stopped, but for a moment they saw nothing, but at length Mark said to the man, " Is that the lost church ? " and he pointed down in a hollow, where, lying under a high sandhill that was overtopped by another yet higher one, stood the low

walls of a hut-like ruin. The man assured them it was the church, and they waited until their friends came up, as Mark said, "to see their first impressions upon this strange place."

"Ugh!" said the Professor, as he brought up the rear with Godwin. "Very suggestive of what all churches will be in a hundred years' time."

"Then what will inspire the most glorious music?" quickly asked Madge.

"Let us get a nearer look at this curious little place," said Mark. He saw the Professor was pumped out by the sandhills, and expected the lunch and a little wine would send him upon another tack: it was too early in the day for controversy.

They descended the slope and stood in the tiny ruin, the west end wall of which rose some six or eight feet above the ground, the other walls hardly rising above the drifted sand.

"A strange place for a modern picnic," thought Mark, "here amidst the walls where centuries ago men and women worshipped God in humble faith."

"Come," he said, "cannot we salute the place in true German fashion with a chorale? Godwin, you

know——. Try Sullivan's quartette, 'Yea, though I walk.' "

"Miss Treverton knows that," interjected Madge.

"Good," said Mark. "We will do reverence to our old British ancestors." And Godwin led off, Edith falling in at once with the top line of that tender, pathetic quartette, that in such sweet tones so pleads and bewails and yet rejoices over human conflict and victory. The three men had doffed their hats. The Professor stood a little away from the group ; whilst Lola, falling in with this strange freak of Mark's humour, was joining in with Edith, Madge also very quietly adding her voice. The man who had borne the hamper was seated by its side some little distance off on a sand slope ; but his Cornish ear was pricked by the harmony, and he thought it strange this laughing, light-headed lot should suddenly hush themselves into such singing.

The music rose and fell amid the sandhills, and then died away, the silence that followed being broken by Mark saying, "No idea we could have got through it so well. See here, the words are applicable ; it is the valley of death ;" and he pointed to some whitened bones that were lying within the walls of the little church.

“There’s lots of them about,” said the man ; “there is a churchyard farther up at the other church.”

The Professor had also drawn near as the singing was ended. “Ah,” he said to Godwin, “and the man who wrote that music had to descend to that ‘Pinafore’ stuff before the English public would listen to him.”

“But, Professor,” interrupted Mark, “you know the lines in German :—

‘Mirza Schaffy, where do I find thee ?
How has thy foot led thee astray ?
The seer, with blind ones around and behind thee :
How come the wise in the fools’ highway ?’

And the Mirza’s reply ought to exculpate Sullivan for his folly, I take it.”

“What is the reply ?” asked Shedden. “I never heard those words before.”

“No, nor any one else in English ; I only saw them on Madge’s table this morning, and learnt them. Such a capital excuse for a bit of folly, I thought.”

“But what is the reply ?” reiterated Shedden.

“Quickly I answered, whate’er it may cost one,
The wise to the fool must aye find a way :
Or wisdom is hidden, her worth is a lost one ;
For the fool to the wise one never will stray.”

“Bravo !” exclaimed Shedden, “and you start as

a wise one ; take care folly does not prove itself the stronger."

"No, he puts the English public down as fools," said the Professor. "But the ladies are wandering away."

Madge had asked the man where the other church had stood, and he had led her and the Signorina and Edith away from the group of men, and so she had not heard her own translation anent folly and wisdom. Silently the three women walked onward, each full of thought, Lola wondering at the sharp contrast in the light chat she had been having with Mark, and his sudden suggestion of this singing so solemn a quartette upon a jovial picnic party. She did not see that her father's words of the future ruin of all churches had aroused the antagonism in Mark's mind. But to Edith's mind, as she had stood there in the sandhills, singing those solemn words, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil," reiterating them as the harmony pleaded and strove, or expressed utter trust and repose, came the thought of that moment when that great wave swept over them, and for an instant eternity had thrown a blaze of fierce light upon her whole life.

They reached the spot where had stood the second

church, that the encroaching sand had swept around, and as the men rejoined them their guide pointed out traces of the foundations that had now been replaced by a church some miles inland, out of reach for centuries of sand, storm, and tempest. Even on this day, when there was but a light summer breeze blowing, the wind was so strong upon this exposed spot that the ladies had much ado to stand against it. One could well imagine a sandstorm sweeping over this terribly wild waste, and burying even churches beneath it. Away to the north stood up gaunt against sky, and sand waste, a high granite cross, about eight feet even now above the sand slopes around it, its rounded head pierced with four graved holes in the form of a cross, and the shoulder of its shaft rudely worked.

The little party were all clustered together again round this cross, but they stood in silence. The scene was so strange, this gaunt cross telling of the churchyard gate where ages before simple men and women had passed in to worship God, but where now was nought but dry, arid sand. No verdure, no flower, or fruit ; all dry hopelessness, even as a desert without an oasis.

Mark and the Professor were standing a little apart from the others ; they had fallen somewhat into an argument upon religion, as they had strolled on from the earlier tiny church ; and as they stood here Mark laid his hand on the Professor's shoulder, and said quietly,—

“ It strikes me, Professor, that this (and he waved his other hand around towards the sand-heaps) is very like what the world will be when your day of no church comes.”

“ But you just said you did not believe in sects.”

“ Sects, no ; religion, yes,” said Mark ; “ but we must not get too deep into argument to-day ; ” and he turned to where the rest were standing, saying, “ Come, Madge, we have an oasis in this desert ; let us go back and see what you and Miss Treverton have provided for us. We can ramble up here again afterwards.”

None were loth to follow this suggestion, and they were soon seated beneath the slight shadow they could get from the still standing west wall of the earlier church, where their man had helped Mark and Godwin to spread out the lunch he had borne up for them.

Down in this hollow they were sheltered from the wind ; and the soft, vapour-flecked sky, and the sandy hills around them, and the little ruin with this modern picnic party beside it, formed a curious picture.

"*Ha, c'est un peu mieux ça,*" said Lola, as she half buried a wine tumbler in the sand to prevent its falling over, and then added in English : " I began to get quite melancholy up amongst those bones and sand heaps."

"The *memento mori*, Signorina, to make us enjoy life the more," said Mark, who was seated next to her, having Miss Treverton on his other hand. " We have picniced together before ; do you remember our railway picnic ? "

" Yes, and you began to go deep into Luther."

" Yes, hit upon *Wein, Weib und Gesang*," said Mark, " and now we have all three around us ;" and he suddenly turned to Miss Treverton, asking, " Do you know many glees, Miss Treverton ? You fell in with that quartette so charmingly, we ought to do a glee after lunch."

" Our choir sing a good many glees, but mostly old ones, I fear."

" Crusted and good," said Mark ; and he looked

across to Godwin opposite, asking, "You know the old glee, ' Since first I saw your face ' ? "

" Have sung the treble, alto, tenor, and bass of it. "

" Then we will have it. "

" But how did you know I knew that one ? " asked Edith.

" I hoped you did, " was Mark's answer.

What was there in the tone that made Lola look sharply round ; but Mark was leaning across helping his sister to some Cornish pasty, that the people at the inn prepared in a very pleasant manner ; and Edith had turned to Shedden, who had sustained a chat with her and Miss Tillotson, and neither face portrayed any telltale sign that there was aught in the words more than their open import.

Shedden had just begun to tell Miss Treverton of the news they had heard on their road down of the Rev. Mr. Gridthorp. " I like to call that man ' Reverend, ' " he said.

" You are not often sarcastic, " said Madge.

" I cannot be sarcastic enough for such a humbug. "

" My sister believes in him, " interjected Mark ; " but go on ; let us hear the rest. "

And Shedden, with interruptions, and help from

Godwin, told the tale of the nine-shilling-a-week schoolmistress of this philanthropist.

The Professor laughed heartily when the story was ended, and leaning across his daughter to Mark, he held up his glass, saying, sardonically, "The Church."

"And its future Bishop, you had better add," said David, who heard the sneer. "That's his aim."

"Such a tale as you have told ought to stop that," said Mark; "but, come now, change the subject; let me give a toast—'The three estates.'"

"Oh, no politics!" cried out Godwin and Madge simultaneously.

"*Verfluchte Politik*," growled the Professor.

"Ah, but my three estates have done more good to mankind than all the Kings, Lords, and Commons in the universe, past, present, and future. Come, let's do it honour. I pray you charge your glasses;" and he waited until all the glasses, ladies included, had been filled, and then, holding up his own, he said, "The three estates—music, art, and literature;" and as he spoke he bowed to the Professor and Lola and then across to Godwin for music, to Shedden for art, and to his sister at the latter word, thus including all in

the toast except himself and Edith. "You and I, Miss Treverton," he gently added, "are the non-toasted company."

"We will drink that heartily," said Godwin; "come with that glee to follow, as you put music first;" and he led off in a falsetto the old quaint part-song, dropping back into the tenor as he found Edith took the treble, and the alto and bass were filled in by Lola and the others.

"*Bravi*," said the Professor, as the last strains of the music died away amidst the sandhills. "England is indeed becoming musical when we can get a part-song without books."

"With the help of our foreign friends," said Mark, turning to Lola. "They have taught us."

"At the risk of being ungallant, I object to that, Tillotson," said Godwin. "We English taught the foreigners glee and madrigal singing; the pity is we have forgotten our own lessons."

"It requires but little to revive it, I think," interjoined the Professor. "If your choirs would but let go their books sometimes, and sing whenever they fell together."

"But could they?" asked Lola.

"I believe many can do things they are afraid to attempt," said Madge.

"I heard a curious instance of that the other day," said Shedden quietly to her, "and one that will interest you, for it is a literary illustration. A friend of mine was travelling in Greece with an artist friend and four other chance acquaintances, and on the line from Patras to Corinth the guard looked into the carriage and pointed out Parnassus. 'Surely,' said my friend, 'that ought to inspire us ; who will write a sonnet ?' and then by a sudden thought, he added, 'Let us all do one, line by line.' He knew his artist friend, sitting opposite, could 'lisp in numbers ;' but he had not an idea of what the other men could do, but he started with the first line, and his friend followed, and the paper went round the carriage until the fourteen lines were accomplished, and it turned out a very fair sonnet."

"How curious !" said Madge.

"Yes ; but it shows what lies in people."

"And so it is with music," said Godwin. "We might have good part-singing quickly all over England if a little more of it was heard in our villages and roads, as in the days when old Pepys wrote."

"Come," said Mark, "it won't do to go back in history too far ; we must break up this symposium, or the tide will prevent our walk round the cliffs ;" and he started up, giving his hand to Lola, to raise her from her incumbent position against a low sand-heap, and then turning to Edith, said, "You must be our guide now."

Madge was just asking Shedden if she could see this sonnet that had been so curiously composed, and he had promised to get a copy of it when he went back to Greyborough.

"Ah, Madge," said Mark, "we did not have your response to literature. No time now. Come, see that the man has everything all right, and follow us. Shedden will lend you a hand."

"We must have the literature response on the sands," said David, in answer to Mark's peremptory orders, which, however, he obeyed, whilst Mark was seen strolling off with the Italian and her pupil, the former laughing and chatting, the latter in silence.

CHAPTER XV.

MUSIC.

WHEN David and Miss Tillotson had finished their task, and despatched the man home across the sands with his now lighter burden, they went on to join the others, running sometimes, and sliding down the sandhills, the full sea breeze adding colour to Madge's already brown cheeks, her bright gaiety and laughter as they slid down the yielding sand bringing back the waywardness of her school-days.

The salt air was giving her fuller life, and she was very different from the quiet, studious girl that Shedden knew, for he had not known her when her waywardness was always bringing her into trouble.

They found the group at the foot of the sandhills awaiting them.

"Come along," said Mark ; "that packing up has taken you too long. Here is Miss Treverton waiting to guide us into some of the caves, and we shall all be cut off by the tide unless we make haste."

"Oh, we have plenty of time," said Edith. "There are no big caves on this side as on the other, but there are some very lovely ones."

"*En route*, then," cried Mark, saying quietly to his sister, who was by his side, "Why, Madge, you look quite glorious. Perran is doing you good ; it has actually polished your eyes."

"Which implies they are generally dull," said his sister.

"No ; but against your brown cheeks they positively sparkle ; don't they, David ?"

"Miss Tillotson has been running," was the quiet answer. "We were afraid you would be waiting."

"So we were," said Mark. "But," he added, turning to Edith, "now we are ready for your sights."

"Miss Treverton seems to be your hostess in her own territory," said the Professor, as Mark joined the forward group and they moved on along the sands. His daughter almost imperceptibly shrugged her shoulders at the remark. All her little plans and plots that she had arranged for a quiet *tête-à-tête* with Mark were dissolving, and promising never to be carried out. How was it all the characters seemed to have changed down here ? Her shy pupil was now

taking the lead of this party, and becoming enthusiastic over the colour and strata of the strange rocks under which they were passing. Miss Tillotson, the reserved, and her cynical brother, were more like children in their glee and delight at everything around them. Their new friend, Godwin, rolled out snatches of song, and the two quietest of the party were the voluble Professor and his daughter—herself. She felt annoyed, and all the bright *mots* she wanted to utter seemed out of place and remained unsaid. But she had little time to think. She and her father had fallen behind, and Mark was calling out to her to notice a wild mass of rocky *débris* they were passing. He waited for them to come up, and then turning to the Professor, said,—

“Can you match this rock scenery near Trieste?”

“Ah, we have something more gentle and tender,” said Lola,—“soft foliage and blue sea.”

Certainly there was no soft foliage or tender blue sea about the contorted rock forms they were looking at. The cliffs were of inky blackness, splashed with here and there great blotches of blood stains, looking as though some giants had quarrelled and shied their inkpots at each other, as Luther did at the devil, and

had ended in a struggle that had shed mightily their blood. Here and there the bases of the rocks were fringed with yellow hanging seaweed, and giant blocks stood in little clear pools, all hung and veiled with this weed, the soft greyish-brown sand forming the floor between. Sometimes the foot of the inky walls were based with encrustacea—here yellow, there pure white shells.

Mark led Lola on to where Edith was standing up on a high block of stone; around her the ink and blood-stained boulders and crags were scrolled and curved with the most fantastic yet regular lines, and just beyond her was a thin, narrow, dark slit in the wall of rock. Mark thought she looked quite queen-like, with the little group around her on the soft, level sand, their forms half hid by the rocks.

“You must come in here,” she called aloud to them as they approached, and jumping down, she led the way into the cave, Shedden alternately assisting her—though she needed no help—and Miss Tillotson, who seemed to emulate Edith in the free, almost reckless way in which she scrambled over rocks and stones.

Mark took Lola’s ungloved hand, and found she required far more help than David seemed to give to

those he was aiding. But at last they were all in the high, narrow cavern that they found led round at the back, and gave light to a lesser cavern that was totally different and grotto-like, with a low arch where it opened into the more lofty cave.

Mark lingered at the back of this cave, scanning for a few moments the delicate colour and formation of the series of three low arches of soft dark tones that formed its roof. At the base of one of these arches that was quite white, hung a vivid green fringe of sea-grass.

"Fancy the sensation," he suddenly said to Lola, "of being here painting or reading, and suddenly seeing a wave filling the entrance. Hark! listen to the roar."

The other figures had disappeared from the mouth of the low cave, and in the silence the sound of the incoming tide seemed to fill the vault above them and sweep in from the higher cave behind.

He saw a flash of fear come into Lola's eyes for a second, as she asked, suddenly taking his hand,—

"There cannot be any danger?"

The roar seemed to envelop them as though so near, and then seeing him smile, she added,—

"You would not lead us into danger?"

"No, nor temptation," he added.

"Oh, but temptation's nice; but I don't like danger;" and he felt a thrill run through her hand that held his.

"But temptation is danger."

"But not to those who are strong. Oh, if I was a man, I should love to play with temptation. Why should men lose half the pleasures of life through fear, if they are strong,"—and then she added, looking up to him—"as you are."

"I doubt my strength," said Mark, as he moved on down a block of rock towards the cave entrance.

"Oh, but you must help me, or I shall fall, and then you will have to carry me out, strong or not."

"I could do that," he said, as he lifted her freely from the rock she was standing upon; and then took her outstretched hand, and they scrambled out of the echoing roar of the tide, and beneath the low arch of the cave with the full sunlight on the brown sand.

They saw their little party standing before a miniature Fingal's Cave, all black, with arching reddish roof. A picturesque pillar of deep-hued brown and

red, standing in the midst of a deep pool of lucent water, supported the roof.

“We must hurry now,” said Edith, “or we shall hardly get round the point before the tide catches us.”

“There was danger then,” said Lola quietly.

“Not with Miss Treverton as our guide,” said Mark aloud. “Who will be round the point first?” and he suddenly left Lola, and taking Edith’s hand with a shout, “A race for it!” the pair led the way along the smooth sand for the point. David and Godwin followed with Madge and Lola, and the Professor strolled on behind; but seeing one wave send its waters up to within measurable distance of the rocks, he also took to his heels and raced for the triple pair that were ahead of him. He was not far behind, but he had to splash through an inch of water before he joined them; for a roller sent the slack water of a retreating wave in again with double strength, and it reached up to the point around which the racers had just past.

They all laughed heartily at his haste to splash through the water, for had he waited but a few seconds it retreated, and the dry sand was left; but

Edith assured him it was best to have hurried, as the next wave might have come quicker and deeper.

The evening was now setting in, and Lola found no further opportunity for a quiet talk with Mark, and he left unput his questions as to her reasons for wishing him to read a book that had given him nausea and almost a loathing for one who could wish him to impregnate himself with such life ; but her presence, her bright quick glances, and the grace of her figure, and that strange sense of self-abandonment she was capable of throwing into every feature and movement, threw a glamour over him, and made him choose his seat beside her at the dinner table, and accompany her to the piano in the drawing-room, when, dinner over, he said :—

“Now we must have some music before you start. You won’t mind my being so urgent ; for you know in this place we get no music.”

“What ! has not Miss Treverton played to you ? ”

“Not once.”

As though in triumph, Lola darted off into a tarantelle of Liszt, her whole soul thrown into the rush of wild life, and gaiety, and mad joy.

“What is this ? ” whispered Mark in the midst of it.

"A tarantelle, from Venice to Naples; will you come?" and she looked down to his face, as seated on a low stool he looked up to her; and her fingers raced over the keys, and rippled and danced in very madness of life. "It's better than picnicing in ruined sandy churches *là haut*."

"But there are plenty of dead churches there," said Mark.

"*Aber Sie sind zu solide, wirklich zu solide*," replied Lola; and as though in a pet at Mark's matter-of-fact answer to her *raillerie*, she threw up her head and rushed onward with the mad dance that ended in the rush and clatter of noisy Naples.

The room had filled as she played on, and, "Oh! do play something else," came from several lips.

"Shall I?" she said quietly to Mark, "or do you prefer——"

"I prefer your music, so do play on," interrupted Mark, and a very contrast was the *morceau* upon which her fingers now lightly touched. One of Chopin's tender *ballades* that opened in gentle rippling, reminding one of the soft summer breeze passing over sunny meadows; but it slowly developed into strong passion and pleading, and Lola's fingers seemed to

cling to the keys, and press from them earnestness and pathos ; and Mark thought, as the notes pleaded and prayed, how was it possible a woman whom heavenly music so moved could bear to even know of such sensual life, could so sink and abase her soul, for surely a power that could make music so full of deep pathos must come from soul depths, and not but from mind training. He must some day find out the true meaning of this seeming contradiction ; and the music swept on as he thought, on into gaiety and lightness, and ended in a passion of conquest and triumph ; and Lola, as she noticed the shade of deep thought pass over Mark's face, looked down upon him as she struck the last chords, with her eyes lit up with strange light, that added beauty to her dark, now sunburnt cheeks, and Mark thought, " She is very beautiful."

A chorus of applause and thanks came from all around as Lola rose from her seat, and a request for more from one or two ; but she said, " I must not monopolise the piano. Mr. Godwin will, I am sure, sing us something."

" Do, Godwin," said David who was close to him. " I was just telling your adventure at Wadebridge. Give us ' The Rover.' "

Mark made room for the Signorina upon the low lounge he occupied, as Godwin seated himself at the instrument, and rolled forth the first dashing notes of the vigorous song that well suited his rich, powerful voice. Of the "vagabond" type of song, the words tell of the freedom of a rover's life and of roving under bright skies; and as Godwin rattled forth words, and threw life into the spirited accompaniment, Lola whispered to Mark, "But we are all afraid to be rovers; I should revel in it."

"What about the exposure and misery?" said Mark.

"Oh! you reduce everything to fact."

"They are hard facts."

"But the freedom of it?"

"Freedom's a myth."

"In Greyborough it is."

"And everywhere;" and he made a sign they must not interrupt the music. The windows of the room were open, and when the song was ended they could hear that quite a little crowd was gathered around them outside. The Perran folk had soon found out that some music beyond the ordinary pianoforte-playing type was going on. Again Godwin sang;

and then, as the time was drawing near for the Professor and his daughter to leave to start on their long drive into New Quay, Mark begged Lola to give them one more piece before she left.

She took her seat at the instrument again, and commenced a low, rippling melody that developed into a fiery, passionate, angry mood, interrupted by tender passages that seemed to be moments of pleading in the storm ; then again the first rippling melody intervened, but to be succeeded by crashing chords that jarred and thrilled, and then died away, to re-awake in a roll of triumphant passages that brought the piece to a finish.

A burst of "thank yous" came from the little audience, and a chorus from without the window told Lola her audience of boxes and pit were appreciative ; whilst loud voices penetrating from the bar outside, as the door opened, seemed to imply the gallery also had been moved.

"We are so sorry you are going," came from several lips, as she said good-bye to those with whom she had spoken.

"Oh ! but you have Miss Treverton to play to you," she said, as she held out her hand to Edith.

Mark noticed the *de haut en bas* tone of these words, and wondered why she threw a disparaging slight upon one who was her pupil, and as he thought one in true sympathy with music.

"But I am not the brilliant Signorina, though I love music," said Edith.

"No," said an ingenuous old lady, whose remarks always came in at wrong moments. "I don't think, dear, you could play as fast as that."

"And there is Mr. Godwin, I am sure, will sing," said Lola, to cover the smile at the old lady's remark.

"Oh! I shall have to go round with the hat if I sing again," laughingly said Godwin.

"And so shall I," added Lola.

"Well, my dear," said the old lady, "I dare say you'd get a good deal. There was a organ-grinder here last week, and he got more than a shilling."

Mark saw the hot blood rush to Lola's cheeks, but he did not know how hard the old lady's words hit the Professor and his daughter; but he tried to cover the quaint old soul's *inapropos* speech with—

"What would we not subscribe to keep the Signorina here? You should not have tied yourself to

New Quay," he added aside to Lola, as they turned to the open door.

"I thought you were at New Quay."

"Did not your pupil tell you we were coming here?"

"She told me she was here, but you said you were going to New Quay."

"And so we have lost some pleasant evenings," said Mark; but he added, as he assisted her with her wraps, "We shall meet again at the regatta."

"In a crowd," said Lola.

"Yes, I expect so," was the to Lola's ears *insouciant* answer; but Madge and Edith had come out with donned caps to say good-bye, and the carriage was waiting with the Professor already seated, and the little crowd around the window and door were standing aside to see the lady go; and so good-byes were said, and hands were shaken, and Lola disappeared into the darkness; but as she looked back she saw Mark and Edith move into the light, with Madge behind them half hiding them from her sight.

In their long drive Lola had ample time to think over the day and its incidents. Her father was sunk

deep in thought, and spoke but little, except to say that after the regatta they must get back ; he had spent too much money already ; and “some of those Greyborough people won’t keep quiet much longer,” he added growlingly. “Why don’t you marry some of these men, Lola ? There’s Penaluna is rich enough.”

“I’d rather kill myself than marry that fool,” said Lola. “No, there are better men than he.”

“Don’t think Tillotson is likely to lose his head ; and Waddington, Shedden told me to-day, is engaged to that quiet pupil of yours, and Englishmen sometimes keep to these matters.”

“Leave me alone,” pettishly answered Lola. “We are in England, and I am free to choose as I like.”

“Only choose quickly,” said her father ; “for they won’t marry a bankrupt’s daughter, and that’s what it will be unless we get money from somewhere.”

Lola had an idea she could get some money if matters came to this, but she did not answer now ; but as they drove on in the dark, close, soft, warm night she thought of all Mark’s words, and his yielding to her when they had been alone in her room at Greyborough ; and she almost cried out, “Oh ! if I could only be with him alone, away from these influ-

ences ;” and then her thoughts ran on : “ Has he read that book to the end ? He looks up to that girl as a model of purity ; he would not if he had done that. I can feel that is the difference between her and me. If she was out of the way ! Luke told me they were not positively engaged ; it was only a boy and girl friendship ; but Tillotson thinks they are. Luke will be rich. Ah, I can hold him tight enough ; but Tillotson has position as well as wealth. If that girl would fall off the cliffs or get caught by one of those waves ! ”

Which thoughts prove that her passion and poverty were driving her into conclusions that, had she known the real thoughts of those who had sat at the picnic with her on that day, she would scarcely have arrived at. Her growing hatred for Edith was more the intense antipathy her nature felt for such types of character. The presence of Edith seemed to her to be a probing instrument that laid bare to herself, though she would not look at it, all the evil in her nature ; and that evil, unchecked and uncontrolled, made her hate aught that brought it before her.

CHAPTER XVI.

"A BIT RISKY."

THE intermittent stormy weather gave but small chance to the dwellers on the Cornish coast to take long excursions, and all the longer walks had to be given up by the little party gathered at Perran ; even Cligga the romantic, and St. Agnes, were yet unexplored ; and all the greater caves that are only approachable at low spring tides still hid their beauties from Madge and her brother. But the grand bursts of sunshine between the storms seemed so brilliant that their very contrast repaid them for the hours spent within doors, and all the party except Mark had some special work that forbade *ennui*, and work too that made them better companions for the sociable hours.

But all were anxious that Jupiter Pluvius should hold his hand for one day, the day of the regatta ; and when Mark rose on the morning of this event, and looked out of his window, to his delight he saw

a semi-clouded sky, well broken up with light between the masses of softly lit cumulus clouds that lay low on the horizon, but with light between and around them.

He went at once to his sister's door, and with a knock called aloud :—

“We are going to have a glorious day. We must start as early as possible. *Dépêchez vous*. I'll run up to the inn ;” and ere long he had been to the inn, and seen that David and Godwin would be ready, and he then walked on up to the house where Miss Treverton was staying, and left a message that they would start at nine o'clock.

It was a pleasant drive they had that morning along the open Cornish country. Mark sat with the driver, and so, as he said slyly to David, left him by the side of his “maid of the mill,” and Godwin by his sister's side, whilst he himself chatted with the driver and got from him all the information he could of the district they passed through, turning round every now and then to repeat the matter learned to those behind him. A vigorous south-west wind was blowing in from the ocean.

“They will have some sea on for this regatta,” he

said, as a stronger puff than usual made him clutch his light felt hat.

"It will be the more fun," said Edith, who was seated in the wagonette just beneath him.

"Rather a heavy sea though, I expect."

"Oh, Cornishmen don't mind that," she replied contemptuously.

"Yes, but how about the ladies' race? will that be put off?"

"I should say not!" exclaimed Edith. "That would be a shame. Fancy Cornish girls being afraid of the sea on such a day as this, and in the bay at New Quay!"

"But the wind is right into the bay," said Mark, "and they are not all Cornish girls that row?"

"That's true," said Edith; "but the New Quay people won't let the race fall through, I know."

The fresh winds and warm sun, now and then veiled by the cloud masses that swept over the sky, put the whole party in the brightest of moods; and snatches of song and laughing repartee made the time of the drive pass quickly on, and they were soon in New Quay; and had met the Professor and his daughter upon the sands, where some venturesome

ladies were defying the treacherous undertow, and bathing in the slack water of the breakers that were rolling on against the pierhead in great volume.

"We thought the regatta would be put off, and you would not come," said Lola, as Mark strolled on with her after the first salutations.

"Oh, it is a grand morning," said Mark.

"But last night was so rough. Will they run boats out there to-day?" and Lola pointed out towards the tumultuous sea.

"Just what I was hinting at; and Miss Treverton laughed at my even thinking that Cornish men or women either would funk such a sea."

"A new character for Miss Treverton, as an Amazon," said Lola sarcastically.

"Hardly an Amazon, say sea dog. Oh, I can assure you she knows what a boat means."

"Ah, she is not going to row herself, or she would not talk so lightly."

"I don't know that," said Mark, and he turned round to where his sister was walking with Edith. "The Signorina rather doubts girls' courage to row in that sea, Miss Treverton."

"Oh, it will go down after mid-day," quietly

replied Edith ; " and in our boats there is no danger. They would live in anything."

" You would rather not live in them, though," said Lola with a laugh.

" I should not mind," was the answer.

" Ah !" came the expression from Lola's lips, with a significant shrug of the shoulders ; adding in French, "*C'est beau parler,*" as she walked on with Mark.

The words were not said so low but Edith overheard them, and was surprised at the fierce anger that surged up within her as she walked now silently on with Madge. " Some day she shall see," she thought, " I do not talk of what I am afraid to do." But soon her face relaxed into its ordinary expression, and the two girls wandered away to the north portion of the sands, and chatted away an hour amid the sea-scented caverns and rocks.

At two o'clock the pierhead was covered with all the inhabitants of the town, and many a visitor. The little harbour was fringed with craft ; strong fishing boats of the west country, fit to live in any sea, sturdy, and scarred, and brown, lay alongside some smart pleasure yachts that dare not venture out even in the sea that was still rolling in in long sweeping

breakers, oftentimes sending volumes of spray high up over the sheltered pierhead, and well sprinkling the mass of sightseers that were gathered there. A crowd such as only can be seen in one of these corners of England, where a certain freedom from restraint brings out the individuality of each man ; and where a knowledge of the sea, and sea life, makes the sturdy fisherman one to be looked up to and respected. All on this pierhead were chatting freely one with the other, townsman and visitor, miner and fisherman, commenting on the chances of the boats, or the swimmers, as the various events were being contested.

The insweeping rollers agitated the waters even within the harbour, the only entrance to which was sheltered by the pierhead, on which our friends were collected, and another massive pier wall that ran out from the shore at right angles to it : an entrance that was very narrow, but round which swept the waves, broken by the outer wall, but with sufficient force to make all small craft and row boats dance and lift in lively movement. The swimming races took place within this harbour, as did the cask races and tub races and other jovial fooleries that required

steady patience on the part of those contesting, and cool nerve and an amphibious nature, that treated matters with equanimity whether on the cask or in the water. These "events" caused roars of laughter, and much excitement amongst the onlookers, for the winning man often managed to lose control of his strange craft at the most exciting moment, and over he would go, to come up again but to see a cooler opponent had reached the goal.

Most of the boat races were rowed within the shelter of Towan Head, that like a long black crocodile stretched itself out to the westward of the town. Here the sea was comparatively calm, only the steady rollers swept in regularly; though a sea this, that an east-coast tourist would find formidable. But the longer races were far out into the open bay, if between Towan Head and Trevose could be called a bay. Far out, Mark had pointed out to him a rising and falling black speck, that he was told was the mark boat for the longer races. Often he lost sight of it altogether, behind a great heave of water; for seconds, almost minutes together, it disappeared.

"But they won't pull out there to-day," said Mark.

"Why not?" laughed his informant, who was one

of the committee, and who had joined the group, having recognised Miss Treverton amongst them.

"But it's a sea for a lifeboat, and not a regatta race," exclaimed Mark. "Look, Professor! see that bobbing little speck out there; some of the boats have to go round that. Would you like to steer, Signorina?" he added, turning to Lola.

They had all turned round, and were looking out over the wide blocks of the pier wall to catch sight of the boat he was pointing out.

"Oh, that's for the fishermen," said Lola slightly, "in their big boats."

"No," said the committee man; "it's for visitors and the mixed ladies' race."

"Ladies!" exclaimed Madge. "Surely you are not going to send girls out there."

As she spoke a sea rushed up the pier wall and made all duck their heads beneath its shelter to escape a wetting; raising a scream of laughter from those who had seated themselves upon its flat summit, for they were drenched.

"Oh, the ladies' race that is just coming off is out to that boat there," he said, pointing to a boat moored at the opposite end of the sand, where pier

and headland broke the force of the sea, and gave quieter though heaving water.

"I knew no woman would row out there," said Lola, with a contemptuous wave of the hand over the pier wall to the open sea.

"But they will in the race for six-oared gigs, for gentlemen and ladies."

"How do they pull?" asked Mark.

"Three men and three ladies in each boat. There are the gigs;" and their friend pointed down into the harbour, where some long, well-built boats rose and fell lazily on the gentle harbour sea.

Shedden and Godwin had drawn nearer Mark, as they heard this information being given, and Shedden quietly asked, "Would it not be wise to give that up to-day?"

"Oh, but the girls won't. They are delighted; it's one of the last races, and one or two are not come down yet, but they will be there. Why did not you send in, Miss Treverton?" he added, turning to Edith. "There are one or two gone in can't row like you."

"It would have been fun," said Edith; and her eyes sparkled with excitement, as she looked out over the

restless waves, blue and white capped in the varying sunlight.

“ Ah, *mais oui* ! It is fun when you have not to do it,” said Lola sarcastically.

“ Oh, there is no danger in those boats,” said Edith quietly to Madge ; “ they would live in anything, and they pull very lightly ; they fly over the seas.”

“ Well,” said Shedden, as the gun fired, and drew them all down to the pierhead to watch another event, “ I would rather no one I cared about was in such a race. Suppose an oar breaks, and the boat sweeps round broadside on to one of those rollers, or one of the girls loses her head ; ” and he shook his own head as a climax to his doubts.

The present race was the one for ladies, out to the nearer mark boat and back into the harbour. The four boats got well away together, but soon tailed off ; one with four girls in red Neapolitan caps, and blue serge dresses, leaving the others behind, and rounding the boat in good style, being well steered ; but a heavy roller carried them a little too far inland, and allowed the second boat, whose steerer had cleverly topped this wave at the right moment, to sweep round the smack and come up with them, and so the

finish was a good hearty pull and close struggle between the two ; but the red caps won, amidst a roar of cheers from the crowd on the two piers as they swept in first into the harbour's mouth.

The next event was an ordinary swimming race in the harbour, and our little party went back again to their old position under the pier wall, to be ready to watch the ladies' race out into the open. Just as they reached the spot the committee man again came up, and drawing Edith on one side, said something quietly to her. Mark noticed an excited flush of pleasure spread over her face, as he heard her say,—

"Yes, I will. I can manage with this dress, if you will give me a cap."

"What is this, Miss Treverton?" he asked.

"Oh, they have asked me to row ; one of the girls has not come, and they can't do without another."

"In what race?" said Mark and Shedden simultaneously.

"The six-oared gigs," said Edith. "I must leave you for a little while."

"Madge," said Mark quietly, "Miss Treverton is going to row in this race ; cannot you prevent her? You understand ; out there ;" and he pointed seaward.

"Do, if you can," added Shedden; "it is not safe only do it quietly."

"Oh, she must not!" exclaimed Madge, taking Edith's hand, who said,—

"Hush, I don't want the people round to think you are afraid to let me go; there is no danger."

"I don't suppose," interjected Lola incisively, "Miss Treverton would go if there was any danger."

"Of course I should not," said Edith quietly, but her deep blue, calm eyes looked full into Lola's black, maliciously lit orbs, with a power and meaning that even made those eyes veil themselves for a second and look earthward. When Lola again looked up, Edith was gone.

"We ought to stop this," said Shedden quietly to Mark and Godwin. They had drawn aside from the Professor and the two girls on to the pier.

"We can't," said Mark, "without making her look foolish."

"But it's really dangerous to all. Suppose a girl faints, or a——"

"It's no good, David; we must live it out, and pray no mischief comes."

"Mischief! Suppose a boat capsizes?"

"Miss Treverton can swim."

"In that dress, and in that sea;" and Shedden leaped on to the pier wall, muttering, "We ought to stop it."

But stop it they did not, for in a few minutes the long gigs were brought alongside, and the nine ladies and nine men came along and down to the pier and descended the ladder into the boats, that even here bobbed and lifted as the broken water swept in.

Edith came along nearly last. She wore her own serge dress, but she had brought her dark brown hair down behind her head, and upon it she wore one of the red caps of the winning boat in the last ladies' race. Madge noticed that her dress hung loosely, as though she had divested herself of some of her clothing, to give freer play to arms and limbs.

"We had better not go near," said Mark in a low, suppressed tone; but he waved his hand as she passed and looked up to them with a free smile on her sunburnt cheeks. They could see the glint of her eyes, that seemed full of light and excitement; and then the whole group turned round again to look out into that tempestuous sea. They could not see the start; but after a pause that seemed a strange space

of time, the crack of a shot was heard, and the rush of the crowd to the wall turned their eyes to see the boats emerge from behind the pierhead.

Out they shot : three nearly abreast, up over a roller, their long black forms showing the mightiness of the waves, as for a second they seemed to lie on the glassy sides. Down into the trough they plunged, but to remount again a fiercer white foam-capped billow.

For a second Mark could not discern Edith, as one boat had three red-capped girls ; but as in pulling out they passed nearer, he saw she was in the last boat, where two girls and the men had blue caps, and her red-capped head was like a fire spot in the centre.

Mark, and Shedden, and Godwin leaped on to the broad wall, and instinctively waved their caps, with a cheer that was borne back to them by the strong wind.

Madge was below. "Help me up," she said ; and Shedden and Godwin half lifted her on to the wall. Mark was watching intently the boats that plunged on now in deeper seas, but yet always visible in their black lengths upon the blue waters. He had seen

that Edith's boat was steered by a ruddy-bearded man, and he asked a bystander the name of one on whom so much depended.

"In the last boat? Why, that's Tregaskis. He knows what he's about."

"Thank God!" was Mark's inward thought; and then added aloud, "The others are good men too?"

"Yes, but it's a bit risky like with them girls."

"They seem to pull well, though."

"Es, es," said the man; "but see them two girls on the port side of the second boat; what could they do suppose the cox'n wanted 'em to pull a bit stronger? It's a bit risky."

Mark said nothing, but looked round to his sister, who was being held up on the wall against the strong wind by Shedden and Godwin. Her eyes were fixed out on the three boats, that still could be seen rising and falling on the now heavier seas; for they were getting out from the shelter of Towan Head, that only partially broke the deep Atlantic roll.

The space between them and the little mark fishing smack was lessening, but as they neared it they saw all three boats lift high up on a sea, and then disappear entirely out of sight.

"They're gone!" exclaimed Madge. "Oh, it's too bad."

"No, no, Madge," said her brother, looking across Shedden; "we shan't be able to see them now sometimes, until they are coming back;" and as he said these words he looked at Shedden, as though he would have added, "if they do get back."

Again they saw them rise on a crest, but now far apart, and then down they plunged once more out of sight; and now two boats only re-rose, as two black specks on the seas.

"One's gone," came from two or three lips.

"No, she ain't! there she is," said Mark's neighbour. "That's Tregaskis. See! he got yards nearer the mark on that sea."

Now they lost them altogether for several seconds, that seemed long minutes to many on that pierhead.

But now they could see them again; rounding the mark, two boats wide of it, and one for a second being blotted out by it.

"Now is the danger," flashed through Mark's mind, "if they get broadside on inturning."

All three boats were again lost to sight. Mark almost snatched a glass from one near him, with a

half apology, and saw that the red spot was in the centre of one of the boats wide of the rounding boat ; but as he watched he saw her brought round and dive down into the trough, and then rise again, her head half pointing shorewards ; again she dived, and when again she rose her head was full for the harbour. " Hurrah ! " he exclaimed, " she's round ; " but before he could look again the owner of the glass had taken it ; but now he could watch the boats, and he saw that Tregaskis had taken his boat well wide to get a good sweep round to head to the land, whilst the others had been longer performing this manœuvre.

Mark's heart felt lighter.

" They'll do it, David," he said ; " you must jump down to cheer them. What do you think of our English girls now, Signorina ? " he asked, stooping down.

" They are not back yet," was the answer, in an icy tone Mark thought ; but an exclamation of " Where's the other boat ? " made him start up again, and as he looked out he could see but two boats, and with his eyes only he could not tell which two they were that came on. His heart sank as he scanned intensely the sea. " Has anything happened ? " he said to the man at his side.

"Wait a bit," was the reply.

And Mark waited ; his eyes strained to pick up the glimpse of the other boat, but only two could be seen drawing nearer and nearer.

"It cannot be, it cannot be," he muttered.

"There she is! got right away there ; that's them girls," exclaimed Mark's neighbour, and he pointed away up some half-mile to the north-west of the smack.

Mark's heart was lighter ; but which boat was it ? He had begun to hope Edith's boat would win, and Lola's cold phrase had made him the more wish it ; but the other two boats were coming on now with sweeping strokes, high up over the seas, and soon they would see the colours, and greet the winner ; all three were safe, for the one that had shot so wide of the mark was well in the bay. It was a good race with the other two, well close together ; but the crowd cheered lustily for the blues, and Mark soon could see the red speck rising and sinking in the centre of the leading boat.

Onwards the boats swept, the girls keeping good time still with the three men. Off went the caps of our three friends as they came in nearer ; the Pro-

fessor scrambled up on the masonry, carried away by the general excitement, leaving Lola down hid by the wall of people, who disregarded the dashing spray in their excitement.

A mighty wave lifted the blues with the one red spot high on its crest, a vigorous stroke at the right moment sent it with a rush past the goal, the harbour mouth, whilst the other boat still lay in the trough of the following sea. A roar went up from the crowd, and a rush followed to the pierhead. Mark and Godwin lifted Madge from the wall. Shedden had leaped down, but the crush stopped them from getting to the head until the boat's crew had climbed up the steps; but Mark forced his way through the crowd to where Shedden was greeting Edith, whose flushed, hot face made her eyes sparkle and glitter as Mark had never seen them before, even in the quarry.

Cheer after cheer rang out as the second crew came in; and as the crush pressed forward to greet them also, Madge was able to get near Edith and take her hand.

"I am so thankful," she said; "it was terrible."

"No, it was glorious," said Edith, laughing; "the seas were grand."

"Awful," said Mark, "once . . . Well, we dare not think. But we are thankful."

A sobering flash seemed to spread over Edith's face, and she lowered her head, and Shedden saw her carry her hand to her face ; but when she looked up again there was a strange, far-off gleam in her eyes, that looked liquid against her hot cheeks, as she said to Madge,—

"I must get rid of this cap, and cool down ; will you come with me ?"

A little knot was collecting round them, for it had quickly spread the red cap was a volunteer, so the party pushed through it up the quay, encountering Lola and her father as they emerged from the press.

"We are so glad you won," said Lola, "but how wretchedly hot you look !"

Edith glanced up as Lola spoke, and said,—

"Yes, I am warm" ; and then she and Madge left them and disappeared into the cottage that served as the ladies' tiring room.

CHAPTER XVII.

MADGE'S LITTLE BOOK.

As our little party drove home that night to the quiet calm of Perran, they were in good spirits. Edith especially seemed to have lost for the time much of the gentle reserve which was her characteristic, and she joined in the general chat, and laughed heartily over the tension which Mark affirmed possessed the whole of the onlookers during the race in which her boat had come off victoriously. Madge, too, was more quick and earnest in her speech, and more demonstrative in her opinions than had lately been her mood ; her old school-girl combativeness seemed returning with the vigour and power indued in her by the strong air of the western sea.

“ You knocked over the Signorina altogether, Miss Treverton,” said Mark, who had resigned his box seat to Godwin, who had offered to take it. “ She looked quite overpowered when the crowd rushed to cheer you.”

"Ah, courage is a grand thing," interrupted Madge. "I wish I had more of it. Edith must be the best of girls, according to my old Mirza."

"Bravo!" exclaimed Shedden; "let's have the Mirza on Miss Treverton's courage. Listen, Godwin;" and as Godwin leant down from his seat, Madge said,—

"Say then how knowest thou the fairest flowers?

By their sweet colour.

Say then how knowest thou the choicest wine?

By its soft odour.

Say then how knowest thou the best of men?"

"I mean women," interjected Madge, "this time."

"By their bright courage."

"Bravo!" exclaimed Mark.

"Hear, hear," adjoined the other two men.

"Wait a bit," said Madge; "I've not finished."

"Say then how knowest thou false canting knaves?

By their *entourage*."

"Not always true," said Mark, "for they get some good people round them sometimes."

"I don't know," exclaimed David; "look at Gridthorp's home."

"Let me finish," said Madge, "and then argue."

"Thy answers, friend, are just ; go thou and do
Some love-emitting labour."

"Good !" exclaimed Godwin. "Your Eastern poet knows somewhat of life, Miss Tillotson. Cannot you give us another bit of his philosophy against cant ? he seems to hate it."

"He loves the truth, does Mirza," exclaimed Madge.

In the darkness of the night her face was veiled, and all reticence was gone. The words with which she had striven to render the terse, thought-enforcing rhymes of her poet came rushing to her mind, and she burst forth with the lines :—

"Hear then what the proverb says :
He who loves the truth, he must
Hold his hand by bridle ready ;
He who thinks the truth, he must
Have his foot in stirrup steady ;
He who speaks the truth, he must
Arms, as wings to fly, hold ready ;
And yet sings Mirza Schaffy :
He who lies, must punished be."

"Then who shall 'scape whipping ?" cried Mark ;
"we all lie now-a-days, in act, word, and deed.
Fancy a man speaking the truth in society !"

"The world would be better if we did, but we dare not," said Edith, in a quiet tone that struck somewhat sadly.

"Oh, Mirza knew that," said Madge.

"Do let us hear his opinion," joined in Shedden.
"I'm getting to respect the old man."

"Go on, Madge," said Mark; "this is new to me."

He meant his sister's freedom in quoting her own words, that generally she hid even from him, as much as the verses she was speaking; but his thoughts were stayed, as Madge began:—

"I once did stand in favour with a prince,
Who ofttimes bitterly complained to me
That no man spoke to him right truthfully;
But all from honest truth did shyly wince.
I pondered o'er his words, and found them true;
But when I spoke the truth, I soon did rue;
And was forbad the court I'd fain convince.
There are princes who yearn
The whole truth to learn;
But that few are given so sound a digestion
To dare swallow the truth, no man can question."

"Capital! Bravo!" rang out from all the occupants of the carriage.

"Why, Madge," whispered Mark, "you are getting

as energetic as Miss Treverton ; her fire is lighting up your courage."

But his words stopped the flow of his sister's thoughts, and recalled her to herself, and to the fact that she had been saying aloud her own translations, that she had felt ashamed for any one to read or even know she had attempted. In the daylight she would never have dared so to speak ; "and yet," she thought, "it is a pity I can't give others my pleasure in these poems ;" and as though he had divined her thoughts, Shedden said to her,—

"You really ought to print these translations, Miss Tillotson ; there is surely good in them."

"And joviality and life," said Madge, aroused again.

"May I not read them some day ?" asked Shedden.

"Oh, I'm ashamed of them."

"And yet you gave some to us now ?"

"And bored you awfully when we were so lively."

"Can't you give us a jovial one to finish with, then ?" he asked.

"Do, Miss Tillotson," joined in Edith, who had overheard their words.

"One more, Mirza, and then a song," exclaimed Mark ; "we shall be soon at Perran. Come, Madge."

"The honours bestowed by princes and kings
Are earnestly worshipped and sought for ;
But the gifts that from God fair Nature but brings,
Men oft in their folly care naught for."

"There," she added, as she finished the quatrain, "I am ashamed of my temerity ; and the Mirza would be ashamed of my verses, I'm sure."

"We are thankful for them," said Shedden, *sotto voce*.

Madge felt thankful for the night, for the hot blood flushed her cheeks, and raced from heart to temple ; but she sat silent, as Godwin had turned round on his seat and asked Edith and Shedden if they knew "Stars of the Summer Night," and then she heard the soft, sweet opening chords of that lullaby, and she overmastered the flushing heat, and added her voice to the gentle strains that rose in the heavy, warm night air, and made a head or two come out of some cottage windows to see what meant this soft music on the lonely road.

About this same hour a solitary figure was pacing the pierhead at New Quay, now deserted and silent,

save the dash of the waters against its outer wall. The sea had gone down, but still the water, that the dwellers in New Quay love to say sweeps on unimpeded by any land, even from the South pole, was still restless and fretful ; and now and then a heavier wave would sweep against the masonry with a angry rush, and then withdraw sullenly and menacingly, as though defeated, yet threatening.

The figure paced on in the dim, murky, overcast night, out to the pierhead that had been so gay in the daytime, and there stood still for some seconds, and then with a sudden turn faced about and walked up towards the land. A shawl, wrapped mantilla fashion over the head and around the neck, fell but a little way over the shoulders, and showed the graceful figure of this lonely wanderer. Sometimes her step would quicken, as though her thoughts urged her on ; and then she suddenly halted, and facing seaward, leant against the wall, and let the salt air from the sea blow in her face ; and here she stood in the dim light, watching the sea, glinted now and then on its restless waters with the soft, pale, phosphorescent light.

As she leaned against the broad, defensive wall

she suddenly stamped her foot, and exclaimed aloud, "And I forced her to it! She would not have thought of going if I had not taunted her. I saw it in her eyes. I gave her her triumph. She shall repay me for this. It's a pity I did not ask her about her Luke. Does he give her presents, I wonder?" and she threw up her arm, and twisted round upon it a snake bracelet with triple folds. "Perhaps he has not so much reason to—— He shall pay for that look of hers. We must get money from somewhere; he shall lend it to us. Lend! And we will pay it back by teaching; hour after hour, and month after month, patiently, of course. It's a pity she cannot see us when I tell him that." She turned from the wall, and again paced down the pier, but suddenly stopped, and with an impatient turn, strode along towards the town. A thought had rushed into her brain, and half aloud she muttered, "She shall see it, and in her own home; she shall ask me down there when he is there. If she cannot see, her old mother's eyes will be quick enough. He will be rich, as rich as Tillotson; but I should like to conquer that man. Temptation is danger, is it?" and Lola strode on up away from the pier, up into

her own room to think, and scheme, and plot how to break herself from her daily life, and revenge herself upon all around her, who looked down upon her, and conspired to hold her in that life.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CLIGGA.

THE days passed on with our little group of friends, but the weather still forbad any lengthy rambles. But Shedden did not object, for it gave him opportunities to make sketches of the rocks; the caves making excellent studios, even when raining, and still better he had utilized the days in which no excursion could be planned, to get on with his picture of Miss Tillotson and her friend. He was quietly reticent when Mark chaffed him, and told him he was devoting much more of his time to the fair mill maiden's face than to that of his sister; but Shedden only once replied to this banter, and then Mark did not know what he meant when he said,—

“Your sister's face requires deeper study. I dare but proceed slowly.”

The time was drawing near when Mark and Shedden would have to return to Greyborough.

"And we have not even seen Cligga yet," exclaimed Edith, as they were chatting over the days still left them.

"We have left a great deal for another visit," said Mark. "But is this Cligga so very beautiful?"

"It is very strange, and I think beautiful," answered Edith; "and we can walk there in an hour easily."

"Then suppose we say we go to-morrow, if fairly fine."

And so it was agreed that the quartette should visit Cligga on the morrow, for Godwin had gone on down the coast, as he was unable to persuade David to quit Perran.

The next day broke with constant downpours of tropical showers, with brilliant sunshine between the torrents of rain; but at mid-day it cleared, and Mark and his sister, as the afternoon passed on, were called for by Shedden, who had already told Edith to be in readiness for them; and with somewhat misgiving looks at the now intensely clear, cloudless sky, the four started off up the hillside to visit this curiously named spot of Cligga, where the veins of minerals are still so rich that men earn a livelihood

in gathering the ore that is washed down by the sea and weather from the cliffs.

They had passed on, high up on the grassy cliff leading westward, until they reached a dizzy cliff path that led round the extreme edge of a green turfy hill. The path was fairly wide, but there was nought between them on their right but the sheer descent of some hundreds of feet down into the glittering, restless sea. Mark and Miss Treverton were leading. Mark had often noticed how David, except when he was painting, seemed to shun his "mill maiden," as he termed her. "He is afraid of going too near the fire," he thought. "He is attentive enough, though, when he is painting her. Waddington should just be present then; and if he has any jealousy in him, he would be aroused." They had got well on to this dizzy path, when Mark suddenly halted, and looking back, saw Shedden and his sister had turned round, and were strolling back towards Perran. Mark shouted to them,—

"What is the matter?"

"Nothing," answered Shedden; "but your sister does not like this walk."

"Shall we go back?" asked Mark of his companion.

"Then you will not see Cligga."

"And I'm curious about Cligga," he exclaimed. So he shouted again: "Shall we come back? is anything wrong?"

"No, no," cried David earnestly. "Nothing. You go on, and tell us what it is like."

"There is a roadway, but it is too late to go that way now," said Edith; but Mark had taken the matter in his own hands, and calling out, "Then *auf wiedersehen*, on we go," he turned to Edith, adding, "Then you will only have to show the wonders of Cligga to me. I suppose my sister was afraid of this path; it is somewhat dizzy. You do not seem to understand the word 'fear,' Miss Treverton."

Edith answered by saying, "But Miss Tillotson is much stronger than she was."

"Stronger!" exclaimed Mark; "she is almost her old school girl self again, thanks to you and Perran."

There was hardly room for two to walk abreast on this height, so narrow was the path now become; and suddenly Edith halted, and without speaking, pointed back towards the little village. Far down

beneath them, stretching levelly away into dim distance, was the bright stretch of sands, and all the jutting rocks and headlands.

"I shall not soon forget these lovely views," said Mark.

"But you see so much," replied his companion. "Your sister has been telling me of all the strange sights you see in your foreign tours. How delightful it must be to see other countries!"

"But we see no beauty to excel this," said Mark.

"I am glad of that," exclaimed Edith. "I love our Cornish land; but to see other countries, and prove it is as beautiful as all, would make me love it more."

"You will travel some day."

"Farming is hardly profitable enough for that. Father says we must economise, as things are going to be worse."

"But some day we are to have you up with us, Miss Treverton—at least, so all the world says; and a certain gentleman we know of intends to be a rich man, I think."

A slight sigh escaped from Edith's lips as she said,—

“ I don’t know whether it is well to be rich ; but what good, rich people might do ! ”

“ How ? ” ejaculated Mark.

“ By helping those close around them. We have just had an old lady die near us leaving fifty thousand pounds to foreign missions, and in our own village were striving, struggling people, little shop-keepers, working night and day in shop and garden to save their children from poverty ; and that woman sent to London to buy her things to—save money.”

“ You do not like public philanthropy, then ? ” said Mark.

“ I hate public philanthropy with private grinding down.”

“ Ah,” said Mark, “ they let every one know what the right hand doeth, but keep dark as to the deeds of the left one.”

Edith laughed at this way of putting it ; but they were soon nearing the point where they made a descent. She led the way now, turning to Mark to look ahead at the sweep of coast line westward, ere they lost it by the headland that would block the view as they descended. She then went on down round a great rock head, where there was only room for one

to pass ; then down between great upright slabs of the most delicate pink and yellow granite.

Mark halted in wonder as he stood between these gigantic piers, all worked by nature in lines and tiers and blocks, the faults running through them in straight lines, and the metal ores of lead and iron glittering or colouring these Cyclopean-like walls. Down between these walls Edith scrambled, Mark losing sight of her as she disappeared round a sharp pillar of this beautiful granite.

He followed on, and as he came round the point which had for the moment hid her, there burst upon his eyes a scene of tremendous grandeur.

An immense amphitheatre some half-mile wide, formed by towering cliffs, some jagged and serrated, some rounded, others flat as though hewn by man. To the height of three hundred feet or more these cliffs rose up, dotted here and there with embrasures, telling of old mine adits worked in ages past, ere yet history wrote down the deeds of those who delved here for riches. Now, looking out on to this amphitheatre, these adits looked like the embrasures of some great fortress ; and down in the depths of the arena, where the sea swept in with roar and thud, lay,

couched in strange forms, great blocks of rock worn into shapes of gigantic animals—one a perfect camel lying down and bending its head one side, others less suggestive in form, were intense in colour. The deepest reds were there, alternating with delicate pinks and rich browns; the black of the slate rock intensified the weirdness of the scene, whilst light greys, yellows, and white spar, contrasted with a bright green hue given by the copper in the rock. In the granite piers of pink and yellow ran the straight lines of black, and the light glittered as the scene had burst upon Mark, upon the bits of sparkling lead and shining spar with which the rocks were filled. The whole scene was massive and grand; wild, yet of marvellous beauty; and Mark stood transfixed for many minutes ere he spoke to her who had led him to this scene, and who was now seated on a slab of pink granite beneath an overhanging, threatening rock, on a ledge that went with a sheer descent down into the swirling sea.

“Such a scene is overawing in its grandeur. You should have brought Shedden, the artist, here, Miss Treverton,” at length he said.

“Would he have appreciated it more?” asked Edith, looking up.

"No, no!" exclaimed Mark; "that he could not. It surprises me!"

"And the rain is going to surprise us," said Edith. "Look at those clouds; they will be on us in ten minutes."

Mark looked to where she pointed, and coming up before the wind was an inky-black cloud, racing swiftly over the sky. "Then we had better stay here. You have capital shelter there;" and he sat himself down on the pink rock beside her. "No finer place to watch a storm," he added. "It is coming too fast to last."

The black cloud mass soon reached the sun, and hiding it, hid also the rich colour and views of the rocks before them. "A most romantic situation," said Mark, as he had to shrink back beneath the granite block to escape the first great blots of rain that drove up warm and hard before the wind. "I do wish Madge had come on; that is, if we get back in the dry. She has been very happy down here. That is half the cause of her renewed strength," he continued; "it is a bad thing for the mind to be always turned inwards." And then he suddenly thought of old Montaigne's advice to get those you travel with to talk

of things they know best, and not to chatter yourself; and as he looked down at Edith, who was seated below him, the book he had read on the first morning of his arrival at Perran came into his mind, and here he thought was a good opportunity to really discover if Lola had dared to lend her such work.

“What a scene Kingsley would have made of such a spot as this!” he said aloud. “You know his ‘Two Years Ago,’ Miss Treverton?”

She looked up to him with her eyes full of delight, saying, “I think now I have read all Kingsley. Mr. Shedden lent me his ‘Hypatia.’”

“Madge’s copy; we lent it to him for you.”

“And were those your sister’s marks?” she asked.

“Some of them.”

“Then some were yours, I know.”

“Guilty,” said Mark. “I like marking books; it proves the soul of a book if there is something in it worth marking. What did you read with the Signorina? What is her taste in books?”

“Oh! she reads French books mostly,” said Edith. “She said the other day that French books were so much more amusing than any English.”

“H’m!” said Mark; “and do you find them so?”

"They are exciting," was the answer.

"But not satisfying," thought Mark ; but aloud he said, "But what have you read ?"

"Oh ! very few. She lent me Hugo's '*Travailleurs de la Mer*.'"

"Ah, that is satisfying," said Mark, "as well as exciting. There is some fine work there. Did she lend you many books ?"

"No ; only that and one of Dumas', I think ; but that is a long time ago. But I like English books the best."

Mark thought she seemed to suddenly turn the subject, and still he was not satisfied that Lola had not secretly attempted to pour some of the foul poison into this mind. He hoped not, and yet he thought, would not the mind that liked such work as Kingsley's eject such poison, even if for the moment it had received it ? and then he looked down upon her, and as the thought of the horrible filth came into his mind he shuddered, and trusted that no knowledge or glimpse of it had entered that brain. His sister had so talked of her, and of her quiet gentleness, and love of honesty and true charity, in the true, almost lost sense of the word, that he looked upon her as his

sister's friend, and almost regretted that the energetic man of the world, Luke Waddington, was some day to take possession of her. She would be happier with Shedden, in his quiet life, if he but gave her work to exercise her energy for activity. For a scheming, cutting-out-other-people life, surely she was not fitted.

The rain was now coming down in straight bars of lashing water. The whole scene was changed to drear darkness. It was a curious situation, these two people perched upon a precipitous ledge, above this now black cauldron, down in which the sea raged and rushed. The thrashing rain drove in under the granite ledge, and Mark had to assist Miss Treverton to stand upon her seat, and they wedged themselves as far back as possible to secure shelter.

"A strange situation," thought Mark. "Now one ought to be romantic. The blood-and-murder novelist could work up a lovely gory effect out of this, by turning me into a murderer. Funny how people like to associate in books with criminals!" As these thoughts went through his mind, he was looking out at the wildness of the scene, forgetful almost of his companion; but she suddenly startled him by ex-

claiming, "See, the light is coming," and her hand stretched out before his face toward the west, where beneath the inky clouds appeared a grey tinge.

"And we shall get a grand burst of sun if that lifts," said Mark. "Oh! what a pity Shedden is not here, and Madge too! Now they will not see it, for go we must to-morrow."

"I thought you had two days more," said Edith anxiously.

"We had, but to-day's letters prevent the extra day. I must be back to-morrow evening."

"Then our pleasant days are over," she said.

"I fear so; but you are not going back yet?"

"No; but I shall miss your sister, and I have something I have been wanting to ask you, Mr. Tillotson. I want you to grant me a favour."

Mark looked round suddenly; he was so close to her that their faces were very near, and he saw her eyes were looking earnestly into his.

"I'm glad to hear it," he said, "if what you want is only in my power."

"I think it is, but I don't know," she continued. "Big business firms are so hard, and perhaps it does not lie with you."

"A business matter! This is a queer place to talk business," laughed Mark.

"Yes, but I may have no other opportunity. I have put it off, put it off; but I must ask you before you go. You do business with the Mudds—Charles Mudd—in our village."

"Yes, we do," said Mark; "and a lot of trouble they have given us."

"A lot of trouble they have had, Mr. Tillotson, or they would not have given you so much, I know. They are honest and hard-working, but the poor man is broken down with trouble. His whole house—wife, and two daughters, and children—have been ill. That man has had to sit up all night to watch his wife, to give one of his girls a chance of sleep to pick up; then, when she could take his place, out into the garden, and then attending to the shop, work that his wife used to do; and when she was pulling round, he fell off a cart and broke his leg, where another man would not have injured himself at all. Cannot you help him, or at least be patient with him?"

"Our people have been patient, I think," said Mark.

"Oh, you don't know what good you big firms

might do, the misery you might stop, by helping such poor people."

"But we know half these people get into debt through their own laziness, or carelessness, or more often drink."

"But this is not so ; it is pure misfortune, and God's visitation for some strange reason. If you help this poor man now he is just getting well, you may make a happy man of him, and his family happy too. Why not do this sort of a thing instead of,—I expect you give big subscriptions to all sorts of things."

"But there is no charity in business," said Mark.

"Charity means love, and there ought to be ; but won't you help these poor people?"

"But our people have rules," said Mark quietly, as he thought over the strangeness of this appeal under such circumstances. "Will the man work when he gets over this illness?"

"He is a thoroughly hard-working and a honest man."

"But do his wife and daughters pull him down—dress, and that sort of thing?" continued Mark. "The other day we had a woman come, in a long sealskin cloak, to plead she could not pay a few pounds. We

could not stand that. Perhaps they fool their money away on dress."

"No, no ; it is purely this strange succession of trouble that has brought him down. Do tell me you will help him. If your firm is hard, the poor man is ruined, and perhaps killed by misery. Do help them."

"The firm will not break their rules, I expect," said Mark ; and as he spoke he saw the pitiful, soft expression well up into Edith's eyes, pleading to him to grant her wish ; and then he continued : " But I will run down and see the man myself." The light flashed into those eyes, and grew brighter and brighter, as he said, " And I will help him all I can."

"Oh, I wish I could go home and tell them at once !" she burst out. " We have wondered why these poor people should have such trouble upon trouble ; perhaps it is for some special good we cannot fathom ;" and an earnest expression overshadowed the joy-light that Mark had been watching.

"What good this girl would do if she could !" he thought, " and the people who can do it in her village, it seems do not ;" and then flashed into his mind the words, " Look at home," and the thoughts rushed

into his brain of all the power such firms as theirs possessed to lighten misery. But Edith suddenly shifted from her position, and peeped out from the rock ledge, for the downpour was slackening, and below the grey tinge of cloud was now a low line of light on the horizon.

"See, it will clear ; the storm and blackness will soon go."

"And we shall have a glorious burst of sunshine," exclaimed Mark ; "the effect will be grand."

The dense cloud masses slowly came sweeping up, a white line of light showing now beneath them ; and away to the north came rolling onward great mountain chains, and valley depths of cloud on cloud, with peeps of deep blue sky, and white luminous vapour. The couple still stood, and watched this grand effect of storm cloud, until the dark veil rolled away from the sun, and allowed his rays to light up all the cliffs and headlands, glittering with raindrops and glowing now again with colour.

"Truly, a marvellous sight !" said Mark. "I shall not soon forget Cligga, Miss Treverton."

"Nor I," she answered, "for you have taken a great load from my mind. I feared to ask you that

favour, and this rain has given me the opportunity. How strangely things work round !”

“ I won’t grumble if they always work so pleasantly,” exclaimed Mark ; “ but look, we must get away from this spot. See, there are more dark clouds that may come on ;” and he assisted her down from her sheltered perch, and the two passed up the slippery, wet pathway between the rocks of Cligga.

CHAPTER XIX.

IN LUKE'S OFFICE.

SOME months had rolled onward, and winter had settled down over the smoke-begrimed town of Greyborough, when on one moisture-laden morning might have been seen, waiting outside the doors of the offices of the Universal Building Society, the little low pony-carriage that generally bore about Mr. Matthew Waddington, of Barton Mills, and his good spouse.

Old Mr. Waddington had thrown an oilcloth over the pony's haunches, and on entering had saluted the clerks in the outer office with a hearty "Good-morning. Mr. Luke in?" he asked cheerily.

"No, sir; he's just stepped out."

"Then I'll wait for him;" and he was shown into the inner office, where a big roaring fire was making it impossible to draw too near it.

"Bit too much of it, that; eh, young man?" said Mr. Waddington, as he drew back the chair the clerk placed for him. "There, leave the door open a bit,

do ; it's just stifling ; and tell Mr. Luke I'm here as soon as he comes in. He'll know what it's for."

"Right, sir ; but I'd better shut the door, you'll feel a draught."

"And want to feel one. No, no, leave it open ;" and the clerk did as he was wished, though against orders, as Mr. Luke did not care for his friends to hear all that went on in the outer office, nor the clerks in the outer office to hear all the talk of his friends in the inner room.

When he was left alone, old Mr. Waddington drew a letter from his pocket, and looking over it, said to himself, "Well, he's got all we've got, save this bit. S'pose it's safe enough. Luke would never let his mother lose a penny, so she says. Let's see what he says : ' We are giving six per cent. now, and that is a great deal better than letting any money only earn three per cent. ; it's just double, as you can see. Last time I was out, mother told me you had this in the bank, and it's foolish to let them make money with your money.' Well, it will be the boy's own some day, so he may as well have it, if it's safe." The outer door opened as Mr. Waddington folded up the letter, and he bent back and looked through the half-opened

door to see if it was his son ; but it was a woman dressed in black, who came up to the back of the long outer office, and spoke to the clerk there. He heard the clerk call up a fellow-clerk, who came back and spoke to the lady. After some low conversation he heard the clerk, in a higher tone, say,—

“ But if you take up paid-up ordinary shares, you will participate in the bonuses, and they are oftentimes very large indeed. It would make a considerable difference in your income.”

The lady turned away from the outer door, and Mr. Waddington could hear her answer,—

“ But is it so safe? I told you this will be nearly my whole income for myself and my daughter, and what she makes with teaching ; but she is not strong, and I want to do the best I can with the money, and all my friends say the debentures at six per cent. are the safest.”

“ But if you wish to make the most of the money, madam,” said the clerk, “ surely you would prefer getting the bonuses occasionally, and when the shares mature they will probably be still further increased ; in fact, these few hundreds ought to give you quite a comfortable income. You say you can do without the money until then ? ”

"Is Mr. Waddington in?" asked the lady.

"Not at present, and he has a gentleman waiting to see him," was the answer. "But he leaves these matters to me, and would advise you as I do."

"Then I will take the ordinary shares."

"I am sure that will be best," said the clerk; and he asked his customer to step to another part of the office, that he might take down particulars, and Mr. Waddington heard no more.

Shortly after this customer had left, the door opened sharply, and Luke entered, and was passing briskly into the inner office, when the chief clerk stopped him, and said something to him in an undertone; and after a few minutes old Mr. Waddington heard his son say,—

"Yes, that's good; things have been quiet lately; on the move again now, I expect;" and then he briskly entered the room where his father was sitting. He started as he saw his father, saying,—

"Hullo, pater! they didn't tell me you were here; didn't expect you."

"Well, Luke, if so be you writes letters you expect answers, don't you? and I thought I'd just have a word with you before I answered that letter. Your

mother always must put her word in. Not but what she may be right."

"Right, of course she's right. Sit down. Have a glass of sherry? We have to keep some here for our country friends."

"Not for yourself, Luke, of course," said his father after a pause, as he saw his son drink off a glass, and refill it, and then replenished his father's half-empty glass.

"Well, now to business, for I've lots to do. Things are always pretty brisk here, you know."

"Glad to hear it, Luke; glad to hear it. But I tell you what it is, you've got a lot on your shoulders. If anything was to go wrong with a concern like this, 'twould be more misery than a battle a'most."

"Go wrong!" exclaimed Luke; "what do you mean, pater? The Universal! go wrong! Look here, pater, that's libel; and a good job for you that door's shut; for if the clerks had heard it, and one of 'em split to a director—well, guvernor!"

"Ah, Luke, you may chaff if you like; but that door wasn't shut just now, and I see a poor widow lady, talking there about her little all a'most. Now, what I says is this: People that has the money of

the likes of such as that—well, there, they've got people's lives in trust, that's all."

"What's the good of talking like that, pater? The Universal pays good interest, and is as safe as a bank."

"Which ain't always safe. But there, that's neither here nor there. I come in about this money your mother told you about."

"Well, it's better to get seven or eight per cent. than two and a half; and the mater was in the right to want to get it out of a savings bank, ugh!"

"Well, I've often heard tell as over five ain't safe work."

"This isn't a bank, pater, it's a business; and as land and houses go up, so our profits increase."

"But supposin' they go down?"

"Why, we keep quiet until they go up again. The value of land round a big town always increases. But if you are afraid of me, pater, why then——"

"No, no, Luke; you've done well so far. I could never keep my dogcart; the pony shay is about my style."

"Well, that's more than some people. But what about this cash? we must settle it, for I must get to work. Some directors will be here directly."

"Well, you shall have it, Luke ; but mind, you've got our little all now—nearly a thousand."

"And it will soon be two. Have a drop more sherry ?"

"No, no ; that's quite enough for a morning."

"And when will you send it in ?"

"Why, you can have a cheque now for it."

"Then, it's out of the savings bank ?"

"Well, you see, your mother she made me give notice."

"And you've been beating about the bush with a cheque ready drawn out ? Well, pater, you needn't have taken up a fellow's time like that. I'll send out the proper receipt by post, and the shares will come on after ;" and Luke stood up from his chair as he laid a paper weight on the cheque his father handed him.

His father rose too, and shaking hands with his son, said,—

"Your mother have been right about you so far."

"Of course she has. Good-bye, pater ;" and old Mr. Waddington passed out of the office, saying good-day to the clerks, and Luke withdrew again, and closed the door carefully behind him.

He sat himself down at his desk, poured out

another glass of the sherry that was still beside him, and swallowed it ; then took out his keys and opened a side drawer, and began to study the figures in a thick bank book.

How altered were the features now bending over these figures, to the sharp, clear, thin, and bright-eyed face we first saw wandering up the lane years ago at Langley Abbas !

The face was rounder, the cheeks fuller, and now flushed and puffed ; below the clean-shaved chin was a full, thick throat ; the fair hair had grown darker, and the clear, sharp, blue eye now was weaker, and even somewhat watery. Hard lines ran from the nostrils to the corners of the mouth, and deep furrows lined the forehead, that now bent over the book of figures.

Luke's face was being indelibly stamped with his aims and longings, his pleasures and his ambitions. As every face tells the story of its life, so his features were being moulded by his passions, and his energy, and his failings.

As a translation ran that Madge Tillotson had shown to David Shedden on that day when she drew back from the giddy walk round to Cligga :—

“Forth from every man’s face
Speaks the tale of his race ;
His loving and hating
Clearly there stating ;
His innermost being
Comes forth to the light :
To be read by the seeing,
Yet not all read aright.”

And yet when that face of Luke’s was lit up by pleasure, it was a bright, jovial, alluring face—a face that lent trust and confidence to those looking upon it ; but now, as it was bent over the figures, the furrows and lines were deepened and hardened, and the brows were more and more lowered over the eyes, until Luke unlocked another drawer, and drew out a smaller banker’s pass book, and commenced examining the figures therein.

At last, as he closed the two books, he said, half aloud,—

“Well, that woman’s money and the pater’s will keep the bank quiet over this half-year ; but we must get in more subscriptions, somehow or other. Can’t offer more interest, gone too far already for safety. I heard that man in at Smith’s say it looked queer only the other day. Well, there’s no balancing till June, and prices will go up before then. Land must

go up round here. Better let the pater's cash square this for a bit ; no need of sending him the certificates yet ;" and he laid his hand on the smaller pass book, which was the record of his own private banking transactions, and no mean record either as to amount, for Luke did a little in stocks and shares ; but he had made some bad shots lately, and the balance was on the wrong side just at present.

He put the two books back into their respective drawers, and sat back in the chair, with his head leaning upon his doubled fist. At last he started up, saying, "No need of the directors knowing of this yet," as he took up the cheque his father had left with him. "Directors! Ha! Why, I could double the lot up if it came to a struggle ;" and he walked across to a plan of a building estate that was hanging on the walls.

"Old Curzon has done well out of this business any way, and he's safe, property up or down."

The plan he was looking at represented what had been two years ago a few hilly fields, that brought in but little rent as pasture land, and gave very much trouble to an old maiden lady who owned them. The boys from the town made them their play-

ground, and broke down the fences, so that the small rent received was swallowed up in repairs, and did not compensate for the worry, so that the old lady was delighted when a reliable man offered to lease the fields on a long lease at a fair rent ; and she hardly noticed the clause that he had a right to build, and also to purchase at a fixed sum within a certain number of years ; she was glad to know she was safe to receive her rent, and that her tenant was to keep the walls and fences in order.

These fields were leased to this same Mr. Curzon, director of the "Universal," and he had just completed the purchase of them, now that whole lines of houses had been run up by speculating builders and the money advanced for their building by the "Universal." The old lady suddenly being awakened to the fact she had sold a wealthy rent roll for a poverty pittance.

"He's got the ground rents, and he'll get the houses into the bargain, if things go on like this. Things can't keep falling. Damnation ! if they do ;" and Luke walked backward and forward in front of the fire that had now sunk down.

"Those infernal builders will never pay their

ground rent, and he collars the lot, or we take over the houses for the money lent; and I'm hanged if they are worth it, especially if there's any back ground rent running. There's whole rows of 'em not let, nor likely to be if things go on. Well, it can't always go back, though 'pon my soul Greyborough gets sleepier every day. I ought to be up in town; there's room to move up there;" and he sat down again at his desk, and, taking a handful of letters from his pocket, began to answer them. At last he came to one not opened. "Forgotten! by God. Never opened; that's all these infernal worries. 'Twon't do to tell her that; I'll answer it right off;" and he opened his letter that business matters had so driven from his mind, and that bore the Langley Abbas postmark.

"So," he suddenly said as he read on, "Mark Tillotson been down there, and he is so kindly hearted, is he? You're so glad I know him, eh, Edith? Well, Tillotson & Co. are no bad lot to mix with. What a business they have! Wonder that sister don't get married. She'd be a pick-up, now; but Edith's worth two of her if she had the cash, and had a bit of the Signorina's go about her. What a woman that would be if she had a chance!

Always hard up, though. The Professor's getting a bit too fond of a booze. Yes, Edith," he said, as he folded up the letter, "you will see me at Christmas ; can't do better than run down there for a day or two, though it's awfully quiet ;" and he replaced the letter in his pocket, and looking at his watch said, "Ah, well, must go down to the bank now ; write to her by-and-by."

But Luke's answer was to be very differently worded from what he himself intended. This little delay formed a tiny connecting link in the events that were drawing together certain of the characters in this every-day drama, and dividing others for ever. Our most trivial actions are oftentimes quick with strange life, that yields weighty consequences. In life the most, apparently, impossible coincidences happen, and the most insignificant incidents lead to all-important, world-swaying actions. The thoughtful, far-seeing man, striving for right, knows how to turn even petty incidents into good ; but the most acute striver for power and wealth oftentimes sees not the import of some little deed, or little word, that crushes all his aims.

As Luke left his office, he ran against Penaluna,

who was still at his post in the bank, though it was not the bank to which Luke was now going and where the business of the "Universal" was transacted. He had not yet been persuaded by Luke to join the board of directors, though the matter was often mentioned between them ; and Dolly had almost come to the conclusion he had made a mistake in not joining, the thing had been so prosperous. It had done big things for Luke. The police all touched their hats to him as he passed them—a sign that Luke was become one of the governing body in Greyborough—and many another salute he received as he and Dolly passed up the street.

Dolly screwed his eyeglass into his left eye, and said to himself, "Why the devil don't they touch their hats to me? I could buy this man up twice over, if the governor would launch out." He felt cross to walk up a street where everybody knew he was rich, and yet to get so little notice taken of him. He, a rich county banker's son, and he knew this Waddington when only two or three years ago he was a measly little miller's boy. So Dolly thought, and grew crosser when they came opposite the bank, and Luke said suddenly, "Not made up your mind

yet, Mr. Penaluna, about joining us? Why not come in some day and talk it over? I expect some one else to join about Christmas, but for myself I'd rather have you with us."

"Where are to going to-night?" asked Dolly.

"Well," said Luke hesitatingly; and then a sudden thought rushed into his mind, and he put his hand on Dolly's shoulder and quietly said, "To tell the truth, I was going to have a bit of music with the Signorina; will you look in?"

"Damn it, how is it you are always going there?"

"Always!" said Luke; "I haven't seen her for weeks."

"Nor I for months," said Dolly with a melancholy air.

"So she said last time I saw her. She likes you, you know."

"Don't talk rot," exclaimed Dolly; "I ain't a fool;" and the eyeglass fell from his eye.

"She does, I tell you. You must always take these foreigners backhanded. Look me up to-night, and we'll go together."

"Thanks, awfully," said Dolly, as he screwed in the glass; adding inquiringly, "Eight o'clock?"

"Right," said Luke, as he turned to go up the steps, saying to himself as he swung open the door, "Idiot! If anybody can get him to go in with us, she can, and we must get some one."

That night he did not wait for Penaluna to call, but left a message that he had been suddenly called away, but he would meet him where they were going at nine o'clock; whilst at eight he was knocking at the Professor's door.

Lola was alone, as he knew, and he quickly told her what he wished her to do. There were reasons why they wished a rich Cornishman to be amongst them, as they were opening up a large business in that district; "and you can twist Dolly round that little finger of yours;" and he took up her hand as they sat together. "Tell him you would like to see his name more, why shouldn't he be some one, and that sort of thing. I shall leave him here with you by-and-by. Only don't go too far, Lola. I can't stand too much of Dolly."

"And how am I to be repaid for making myself miserable with him for hours, perhaps?"

Luke put his lips to her little, well-formed ear and whispered something.

"When?" said Lola.

"The day we can print he has joined us."

Lola's eyes had flashed out as Luke had whispered a sum that to her was a large one; but a thought, too, had crossed her brain that added brilliancy to the flash, and she said, her hand still resting in his,—

"Why don't you get Miss Treverton up to do these sort of things?"

"Oh, Edith has no power over any one like you have."

"Except over yourself;" and she laughed a cynical, sneering little laugh.

"She has no power over me," said Luke.

"Then why do you go down there? You are going at Christmas."

"Who told you so?" asked Luke.

"Ah, I know, you see."

"Oh, I like going down there out of the worry and bother up here. But it's a bit dull sometimes after the first day or two."

"Then why don't you have some company? Ask me down there!" she exclaimed, as by a sudden inspiration; and she snatched her hand away from him, saying, "That would be capital."

"But," said Luke hesitatingly, "I don't know——"

"Then you've no power over her, if she objects. Poor fellow! Do you always do as you are told?"

"Oh, it's not Edith, but her mother."

"Ah, her mother; she's much to be feared, isn't she? Well, you must get your Edith to talk to Mr. Penaluna—to ask him, instead of me."

"No, no. Come now, be reasonable."

"Will you ask me down there for a week at Christmas? I've set my mind on it now."

"If you will do as I say, I will. Come now, you must promise quickly; he will be here soon."

"Edith must invite me."

"Yes, she shall," said Mark. "That's lucky; I was going to write to her to-day, and did not. I can tell her now. Must say how lonely you are up here at Christmas time, and how nice it would be for you and her to play together."

A ring at the bell stopped their talk, and Mr. Penaluna was announced.

CHAPTER XX.

CHRISTMAS AT LANGLEY ABBAS.

CHRISTMASTIDE in an English country homestead, where wealth is not, but where poverty is unknown,—where comfort seems to forbid the thought of care, and silently chides luxury.

Few more typical homes could be found where comfort reigned, and calm and peace seemed to possess its indwellers, than the old abbey at Langley Abbas; but for a week past the calm had been broken in upon by the arrival of Lola, and the black old oak roof re-echoed to her rhapsodies and tarantellas upon the piano, that now stood by the old pointed, deeply moulded doorway, beneath which monk and priest had often passed in bygone centuries. Out under the walnut trees they were now lying, their stone coffins sometimes being upturned when a foundation was dug for a wall or some other farm work caused some excavations to be made.

Edith had been somewhat surprised to receive Luke's request to ask Lola down for Christmas ; but when she had talked the matter over with her mother, and Luke's reasons had been considered, that Lola had a bad time of it at Greyborough, as no one invited her anywhere, and further that it would be a capital thing for Edith's music and French for her to have Lola down for a couple of weeks, Mrs. Treverton had said, " Well, Edith, perhaps it will be a kindness ; these poor teachers want friends badly sometimes, and Luke is right that you get no chance of speaking a word of French down here."

And so Edith had done what Luke wished, and sent an invite to Lola to spend a week or two with them at Christmas ; though, as she wrote the letter, the thought of Lola's sneers at New Quay had rushed into her mind, but she had crushed back the rising anger. She had misjudged her probably, and it was simply her love of a quick answer and sharp speech that had made her madden Edith by her words. So Lola had come, and had entered at once into their village life. She had gone into the cottages with Edith, and had chattered with labourer, and with shepherd and bailiff, and little, round, fat, rubicund

Jonathan Brumby had declared, in his thick, husky voice, that "Misee wur sharp as a niddle."

One morning she had surprised Edith by suddenly appearing in the cold, chill dairy in dressing gown and slippers. She certainly looked an effective figure against the cold white lines of wide milk pans and chill white walls, her deep red dressing gown open low at the neck, and her dark hair brought back loosely from her head.

"Go back," said Edith ; "you will catch your death of cold, and in that dressing gown."

"Give me something to do that will make me hot ; you look so warm."

Edith had just finished making butter with a barrel churn, and was now moulding the delicate yellow lumps into shapely pats ; a smaller upright churn stood by her side, into which she had poured some milk that had been rather too much for the barrel churn ; and when Lola refused to go upstairs, as she wanted to see the work, she said, "Then churn this, but you will soon be tired."

Lola took the handle and began vigorously to move it up and down, whilst Edith went on with her moulding. When she looked round again, she saw

Lola's face was flushed, and her action was slower, and ere long she saw she would come to a standstill and spoil the making, so she took the handle that Lola seemed to willingly release, saying, "You must not stop, or you will spoil it all. There, you are warm now ; go upstairs again and dress ;" and Lola acquiesced, for she had felt she must stop soon, her arms were aching so terribly. She looked round as she left the door, and saw Edith handling the churn as easily and lightly as though it were but a feather's weight.

Lola had made her presence agreeable to Mr. and Mrs. Treverton ; but sometimes of an evening, when the three women were seated at the table, and Mr. Treverton was in his armchair by the fire, whereon burnt pleasantly odorous chumps of wood, she had caught his eyes fixed upon her with an inquiring, doubting, searching look ; but she had quickly adapted herself to their quiet family life, had gone out visiting with Edith, and was especially enthusiastic over two old people to whom they gave assistance—great-grandmother and grandmother, who had in the same house with them children and grandchildren of the grandmother. It was one of the chief sources of pride in

the village, that in one house they had living four generations.

Luke did not come down, as he had promised, three or four days before Christmas, but delayed his arrival until Christmas Eve. He was rather doubtful of this visit. How would Lola act? He did not care to be too much in her presence under Mr. Treverton's eyes, and sometimes he began to think that Edith's despised small dowry might come in useful, for lately things had gone very wrong, and Dolly Penaluna had not yet gone in with the "Universal," though he had gone so far as to take up a correspondence with his people about it. This correspondence had detained Luke, conjointly with a matter which promised to place about a thousand pounds in the Society's hands. This intending depositor had had all particulars, and Luke had hoped to have had the cash in the bank before the close of the year; but the matter had hung fire, and Luke had to leave Greyborough with the affair still in abeyance, his clerk having instructions to forward on to him at once any letters from these two quarters, for his personal attention.

It was a typical English Christmas Eve; and Luke's

drive from the station to the Abbey (a distance of some four or five miles), by the side of old Jonathan Brumby, had been in gusty blasts of driving rain, leaving but little chance for Jonathan's thick voice to reach Luke's ear.

"You ain't a quite forgot us down here then, Mr. Luke ; don't see much of 'ee now," he remarked, as they were passing along under the lee of a park wall.

"Not too much time, Jonathan," said Luke ; "we can't take things so easily as you do."

"No ?" said Jonathan. "Well, it's a sight o' years since I can mind you. When be you going to make us talk about 'ee? Missie is getting on, and a man's better with a wife by his side."

"That's if he's got cash enough, Jonathan. It takes a lot to keep a house up our way."

"Es, es ; but you must be gettin' on, and a head that's grey, serves not for maiden's play. Why, you'm thirty now !"

"The maidens, as you call them, don't mind the head being grey, if there's plenty of cash with it, up our way, Jonathan ;" and Luke's face shrunk down into his coat collar as a burst of wind, and hard, cold, sleety rain rushed into their faces.

As they drove into the abbey yard the doors opened, and Edith and Lola called out, "Come in out of this horrible weather ;" and Luke was ere long seated, after a good supper, beside the odorous fire opposite Mr. Treverton.

"Come, get me my slippers," said the latter, "and Luke's too."

Lola was before Edith in this service ; she quickly had placed Mr. Treverton's before him, and turning to Luke said, "Where shall I find yours, Mr. Luke ?"

Luke searched her face for a second, as he answered, "Beside my bag in my room."

"I will get them," said Edith.

"No, no ; I can be quickest ;" and Lola forestalled her, and flew from the room and reappeared with Luke's slippers, which she placed before him with a look that alarmed him for the next move she might make.

She drew her chair near his, and commenced asking news of all in Greyborough. "And that idiot Penaluna, has he joined your board yet ?" she suddenly inquired.

"Matters are not quite settled," answered Luke repressively.

But Lola was not to be repressed; she chattered on upon Greyborough matters until Luke, in desperation, turned to Mr. Treverton, whom he saw was quietly watching Lola behind the smoke which arose from his pipe. "And our mutual friend Gridthorp, Mr. Treverton, is, they say, to be made a canon."

"A canon, eh!" exclaimed Mrs. Treverton, who, with Edith, had been seated on the opposite side of the table, listening to all this Greyborough news. "How will your father like that? But they will get rid of him now."

"Not a bit; he sticks to the living—seven or eight hundred a year—and gets the canonry into the bargain."

"So, so," said Mr. Treverton; "that's been his aim has it?"

"No, a bishopric is his aim; but I suppose he thinks this is a step to it. But he hasn't got this yet, it's only rumour; perhaps he's spread it abroad." And now the talk drifted away from Greyborough, and Lola lost her hold upon the conversation, and ere long the women folk withdrew for the night, leaving the two men to their hot tumblers of grog, which Mrs. Treverton had mixed for them ere she left the room.

That night, as Lola lay awake listening to the moaning wind, that lessened slowly down to calmer and less frequent gusts, she thought how easily she could oust Edith from her place of *fiancée* to this Luke Waddington, future Mayor if not M.P. for Greyborough.

Would it not be her safest game? at least it would satisfy her vanity, and cool her envy. “‘Friends since children,’ she said they had been,” she murmured, as she turned in the soft, yielding, snowy bed; “and I have never known a friend. She shall not marry him, and I will if he is really rich. How can I find that out? The *padre* says it may not be all—That fool ’Luna shall tell me all about him. Oh! it will be glorious to snuff that girl out here in her own home.”

The next morning Lola did not appear at the breakfast table; and as she pleaded a headache to Edith, who took her some coffee to her room, which was over the archway of the tower, Edith suggested she should not go to church, as the service was early. Luke also did not go to church, as he wished to wait for his letters; and on Christmas morning they were not delivered until after the service had commenced.

Mrs. Treverton had said, "But surely you cannot answer anything before night?" but he had replied, "But I may have to telegraph instructions for my people to act upon early in the morning," which was excuse enough to prevent his attending the service.

Lola dressed slowly after Edith had left her. The morning was very uninviting; and as she looked out of the window on to the sodden lawn, she saw that the driving rain was giving place to occasional big flakes of wet snow, that fell heavily to the grass. She shuddered as the thought of the cold, chill weather pierced in upon her, and she made more haste now to get down into the warmer dining-room.

"What a curious, dull old place this is!" she thought. "I wonder if there are still any secrets hidden, any skeletons walled up like the one in that old monastery of Bösig;" and she went and opened the door that led down the narrow tower stairway that was now blocked up. As she did so she heard a sharp ring of the bell come up to her, and Luke's voice call out, "Bring in the letters, please." "Why, how plainly you can hear!" she thought. "That's Luke; is he alone? I thought they were all gone;" and she went a few steps down the dark, narrow stairs and heard

Luke say, apparently to the girl who brought in the letters, "Thanks ; shut the door ;" and Lola heard the girl close the door behind her, leaving Luke alone in the room. "Now for it," she heard him say aloud ; and she crept further down the little turret steps until she was close to the canvas partition that alone separated her from the room in which Luke was opening his letters. She heard the tear of the paper as one after the other of the letters were opened. "He must come in now ; Lola must make him ; she can do it," she heard him say aloud, after a silent pause ; and her lips were tightened to suppress a half laugh at the fact that Lola was listening to his commands.

There was again a rip of paper, and a dead stillness. She put her face close to the cold wall and waited.

"Damnation !" suddenly burst from Luke's mouth, in a tone that startled Lola, and made her push her face against the thin canvas shield that hid her in the dark tower from him whose fierce expletive had frightened her. She held intensely still, after this slip ; and she heard a rustle as of a leaf turned over, then a fall as of paper on the table, and then hurried footsteps backwards and forwards in the room ; then the

footsteps crossed over, and came nearer, close to where she stood ; she felt she must be seen, and shrank back.

“ Why, it’s ruin ! Once a run begins, it’s ruin. We must get that thousand. I could no more get things straight now than I ——Those infernal mines ! back, back, back ;” and Lola heard Luke sink heavily on to the couch that was against the false wall where she stood ; her fingers could have rested on his shoulders, as she waited in the darkness with ears acutely strained to catch every word.

Suddenly he started up. “ Everything wrong ! Those fools of clerks ! I must go back, and Lola must come too. Penaluna must join at once. Most people are fools at Christmas time. If he doesn’t, I must look after myself, and that means America ; with Edith’s money we could do all right there.”

The hurried strides slackened, and Lola heard the letter that had been the cause of this agitation taken up again, and then she heard words she did not understand. “ Given notice to withdraw ; that must be kept dark, or a run’s safe, and it’s all up.” She heard him gather up the letters and go to the door that led across the hall to the other rooms ; she

silently turned, now cramped and chilled by her long halt in this narrow tower, and softly she re-ascended the stairs and once more gained her room. She crossed over to her glass, and half looking at herself and half at the increasing snowflakes that were overpowering the raindrops, she said aloud,—

“That settles it ; it must be Mark Tillotson or—— Ugh ! the alternative is too disagreeable. Edith may keep her ruined Luke, but she shall see I could take her from him ;” and she threw herself down in a chair by the side of her dressing-table, and thought over the many evenings Luke had spent in her rooms. He was bolder than other of her admirers, and Lola’s warm Southern nature liked him for his boldness ; and the sensual thrills that sometimes pervaded her when Luke had been with her, perhaps after some evening concert or other amusement, made her have some regret that if he was ruined she must look elsewhere for a husband, if not for a lover.

“It is useless. End this life I must ; at least there’s one horrid way out of it ;” and she started up, and looking out to the snow that was now falling thick and fast, she said half aloud, “I’ll go down, we may as well be chatting comfortably together when they

come in from church." She went and carefully closed and locked the door leading to the narrow tower, and descending the other stairs, passed round into the room where Luke was sitting back on the couch, lost in thought. She quietly went up to him, and passed her hand lightly over his face. He started up and crumpled a letter in his hand.

"Why, Lola," he said, "I thought every one was out; where have you been?"

"Oh, I had a headache,—didn't Edith tell you?—and am only just come down. How worried you look, and down here with the fair Edith to caress you!"

"Oh, Edith doesn't spoon."

"And Luke doesn't like to, does he?" she said sarcastically.

"Look here, Lola, we may not have a quiet word again. I'm going back first train in the morning, and I want you to go back too, in a day or two at least, and finish that business with Penaluna. You know my promise, and the matter must be settled. We can't go on any longer."

"What! the Universal wants Penaluna to help it?"

"Help! not a bit of it; but the thing has to be

filled up. Come now ;” and he took her hand and drew her to the seat near him. “ You must do as I wish.”

She sat down near him and whispered quietly, “ Why can’t Edith do what you wish ? She is to be your wife.”

“ Now, Lola, don’t be jealous. Edith isn’t you ;” and he drew her closer towards him. “ When will you come back ? ”

“ In three or four days,” she said, rising ; for she heard the outer door opening, and in burst Edith (followed by her father and mother), crying out, “ Oh, this snow is lovely ! I do hope it will last.” She halted suddenly in step and word as she saw Lola standing before Luke, his face turned up towards her, with a strange, it seemed pleading, expression.

“ Oh, I hate snow,” said he.

“ Ah, but it is so calm and pure, and so much more Christmas-like than the rain. And is the headache quite gone ? ” she added, turning to Lola.

“ Nearly, I think your scent did it good ; but here is Mr. Luke going to leave us again already.”

“ Going, Luke ? ” joined in Mr. Treverton ; “ but you can’t to-day, no trains.”

"No, worse luck. I must go first train in the morning ;" and he cast a look at Lola for her words, that in her malicious spite she had apparently let slip.

"Why, bless the boy," exclaimed Mrs. Treverton. "Going, and Christmas Day ! Can't business keep quiet for even that day ?"

"I've had some letters, and my clerk, as usual, has muddled an important matter."

"Oh, Luke," said Edith, who had kept silence, "don't worry about business now ; it will all come right. Here have we been singing 'peace on earth,' and the quiet snow seemed so peaceful and pure when we came out of church, and here you have been worrying. Why did you have any letters sent on ?"

"There, go down in the other room with Edith while dinner's laid, and change your mind," said Mrs. Treverton.

"Yes, you ought, I'm sure, with her persuasion," added Lola.

Edith had thrown off her hat and cloak, and placed them in Lola's arms with the words. "Take these upstairs for me ;" and she led Luke down into the old, comfortable room, where the old black oak ceiling with its carved bosses added by contrast to the warm,

leaping glow of the great fire. She shut the door after Luke, and taking his hand, drew him towards her, as she sat down upon a square, roomy old couch, that was draped in soft wool rugs of her own needlework.

"Oh, Luke," she said, as he yieldingly sat down beside her, "why do you trouble and worry so much about money? You have more, you must have, than you ever expected to have; and yet your whole life is wearied. Why, your very face is changed to what it used to be. Money will not make us happy. You have no peace, no quiet happiness. Leave the business alone and stay here, and you will go back rested and comforted. Why not be thankful for what you have, and not worry and struggle so for more?"

"But suppose I lost what I have," said Luke moodily.

"Better that than live always as though all life was to struggle for more."

"What would you think of me if I went—well, down again?"

"Oh, but you can't; I know what it is," said Edith: "you are trying to do more than the Society work; that's safe to you, and you are not satisfied. I have heard father say you were overdoing it."

"Wouldn't you like me, your old playfellow, Edith, to be a great man?"

"I would rather you were a happy one."

"And would you try to make me happy, Edith?" said Luke, a thought suddenly flashing through his mind.

"That I would," she answered freely.

"Then I wish I could stay, but I must come down again as soon as I can, and you must write me a nice long letter, telling me how I am to be made happy, and how I can always trust in you to help me."

"Help you! Luke. Oh, how I wish I could make you see life differently! You are so changed. Your whole life is eaten up with this money-getting."

"Why, Edith, so is every one's. Look at old Gridthorp. The parsons set us a good example. There, your mother is calling us to dinner."

"And won't you stay?" asked Edith.

"No, I must go; it is most important; but mind, I shall look for a good letter, telling me how you will help me," and he bent his head to hers, "when we are married. At least, you won't desert me if I do not get richer."

"Come, come, Luke," said Mr. Treverton, as they

went into the dining-room. "You are a pretty fellow, to upset a Christmas dinner like this. Come, no more nonsense. Sit down, and let us hear no more about going all at once. You might at least have kept quiet until after dinner. Come now, the table looks inviting;" and he beckoned all into their seats.

Edith felt strangely absorbed during this meal, and Lola saved her the trouble of talking, for she chattered on with Luke upon all sorts of subjects. Half-betrothed as they had been, no word of marriage had ever before passed Luke's lips; but she had felt herself bound to him from her girlhood, and now he had given her the right to try and help him, to try and make him see life from another aspect. If he must go on the morrow, she would do as he wished, and prove to him in that letter how she longed to help him, her old boy playmate and friend; and her eyes looked outwards for a moment across to where he sat, and she saw Lola leaning forward and looking into Luke's face, for an answer to a question she had put. But Edith now felt confident in her old friend; the bitterness against Lola was gone. She knew Luke was an honourable man.





